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PERSPECTIVES OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

by

© DIANNA AILEEN MILLARD

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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Date: September 21, 1984

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the administrative role of the elementary school assistant principal in selected schools in Alberta. Six assistant principals within three school districts were purposively selected as subjects for the study. Additionally, the principals of the respective schools, and supervisory central office staff were interviewed.

The field research qualitative methods of in-depth interviewing, observation, and categorical analysis resulted in the formulation of categories from which five themes emerged.

The themes which emerged from analysis of the data were: (1) Assistant principals have a vision for the improvement of education; (2) Assistant principals experience a number of changes upon becoming an administrator; (3) Assistant principals view the essence of the position as being a training ground for a future principalship; (4) Assistant principals are jacks-of-all-trades; (5) Assistant principals view their role as having great potential.

Conclusions were drawn from the findings. Based on the subjects in this study, it appears that: (1) These assistant principals are energetic, highly motivated people who are expecting to be trained for higher administrative positions; (2) The position is a valuable one for directed training; (3) There is a potential for conflict in time and interest

between administrative duties and teaching duties due to a change in focus; (4) There may be a sense of isolation and separation on the job; (5) The job is interesting, filled with variety, has many interruptions, and is often shifting or changing; (6) The position is viewed by the assistant principals as essential and as fulfilling a real need in the school; (7) The assistant principal is largely dependent on the principal for training, duties, and advancement; (8) Assistant principals feel a need for further training particularly in teacher evaluation and budget; (9) Assistant principals feel a need for greater interaction with other administrators; (10) Although there are frustrations associated with the position, the assistant principals generally view their positions as rewarding and fulfilling; (11) The optimum use of the assistant principal is as a member of an administrative team.

The findings and conclusions of the study had implications: for school districts regarding the training, selection, and role clarification of assistant principals; for principals regarding the training, development, and utilization of their assistant principals; for universities regarding the areas in need of further administrative training; and for individuals who are aspiring to school administrator positions.

There are also recommendations for further research and study.

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CHAPTER 1

IDENTIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

CONTEXT OF THE PROBLEM

Today in education, school effectiveness is of prime concern. Studies have been done to assess the characteristics of schools which are, relatively speaking, most effective. These schools have been judged outstanding by scholastic achievement, by social standards, and by community support. The studies suggest that the characteristics most frequently associated with effective schools include: strong leadership, clearly understood objectives, an orderly climate, high expectations, and an overall positive attitude (Edmonds, 1978; Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, Ouston, and Smith, 1979; Brundage, 1981). A dominant and consistent finding is that strong leadership is the key characteristic of excellent schools. Recognizing the importance of leadership to effective schools, it is necessary to know the state of leadership positions, their potential, and areas in need of improvement.

Leadership in schools is assumed primarily by the principal and the assistant principal. While there appear to be specified school district policies for the duties of

principals and many studies on the principalship, relatively little has been done to specify the role or to investigate the existing and potential role of the assistant principalship.

The assistant principalship in today's schools could be a significant position contributing to the effective functioning of the school. As part of the school's administrative team, the assistant principal can have a direct influence on school effectiveness. As a partner in leadership with the principal, the assistant principal can be a valuable asset to the principal whose administrative duties have increased with greater demand for supervision, record keeping, productivity, and accountability. Since the position of the assistant principal may be a preliminary position to a principalship, this position can be a valuable training ground for future principals.

However, much of the literature suggests that the assistant principal position is poorly conceived, poorly specified, and usually dependent almost entirely upon the individual school for its structure. This has resulted in a haphazard approach to a position which has the potential for being significant to excellent leadership in schools.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of the study was to investigate the administrative role of the elementary school assistant

principal in selected schools in Alberta.

Research Questions

More specifically, the researcher sought to answer:

What perspective do selected elementary assistant principals hold of their position?

Within this major question were possible sub-questions:

1. How did they get the position?
2. What were the feelings of the assistant principal upon receiving the appointment to the position?
3. What are the current feelings regarding the role of assistant principal?
4. What are the duties of the assistant principal?
5. What contributes to the fulfillment or rewards of the position?
6. What are the frustrations associated with the position?
7. To what extent is the assistant principalship perceived to be transitory to a principalship?
8. To what extent is the assistant principalship perceived to be a training ground for a future principalship?
9. What do assistant principals perceive to be the future of the position of assistant principalships in their school jurisdiction?
10. What do assistant principals consider the potential

of the position to be?

11. How best may the potential of the assistant principal position be achieved?

These questions provided the framework for the interview guide which was used in the interviews with the assistant principals.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Previous studies on the assistant principal focused primarily on secondary assistant principals, utilized survey instruments, were large hypothesis testing studies, and most in Alberta were done ten to twenty years ago. There appeared to be a need for a qualitative, in-depth investigation of the role of the assistant principal in elementary schools in Alberta today.

It was hoped that an in-depth investigation of perspectives of this role could serve to direct thinking and future studies with respect to the feasibility, potential, utilization, and development of the assistant principal role in elementary schools.

Leadership has been identified in school effectiveness studies as a key component in effective schools. It is anticipated that findings from this study may be of value to assistant principals, principals, superintendents, school boards, educational administration staff and students, and educators desirous of becoming school administrators by

providing insights for future thinking, policies, and programs which may lead to greater effectiveness in the utilization and development of school administrators.

LIMITATIONS

The main limitation of this study was that while the small sample size of six subjects was valuable for description leading to greater understanding and generation of implications, the subjects described may not be representative of all elementary school assistant principals and the study may not be broadly generalizable.

Additionally, it was assumed that the assistant principals involved as subjects were open and honest in the information that they supplied, and that the researcher analyzed and presented the information accurately and objectively.

SELECTION OF SUBJECTS

The study was delimited to include six subjects: two purposively selected elementary school assistant principals from each of three school jurisdictions. The sample size was believed by the researcher to be reasonable and workable for this qualitative study intending thick rather than thin description and intensive rather than fleeting interaction. Further, the three jurisdictions were arbitrarily selected.

Manageability of the study and time constraints required the selection of only three jurisdictions. These were chosen for ease of access. A variety of type and size of jurisdiction was intended to provide wider perspectives of the role of the assistant principal in the elementary school.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Assistant Principal: The person next in authority to the principal of the school. In this study the term "assistant principal" was considered to be synonymous with the term "vice principal."

Administrative Duties: Duties to be performed by the principal or assistant principal, related to their position, that would not be required of a classroom teacher.

Administrative Time: Time other than teaching time, available to principals and assistant principals for the performance of administrative duties.

Administrator: An educator who is designated as principal or assistant principal.

Elementary School: A school in which education is provided for pupils from kindergarten to grade six.

Perspective: "A co-ordinated set of ideas and actions a person uses in dealing with some problematic situation; a person's ordinary way of thinking and feeling about and acting in such a situation." (Pansegrau, 1983:10)

Role: The functions assumed by an individual because of

his position.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

The content of this chapter focused on the context of the problem, the statement of the problem, the significance of the study, the limitations, the selection of subjects, and the definition of terms.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature and related studies on the assistant principal.

Chapter 3 outlines the research design and methodology used in this study. Both a rationale for and description of the use of qualitative methods, particularly, in-depth interviewing, observation, and categorical analysis are discussed.

Chapter 4 presents the context of the study: a description of the setting or situation of each of the subjects.

Chapter 5 provides the findings based on the categorical analysis of the data. The perspectives of the subjects are presented through quotations from the interview tapes to provide an accurate account of their views within each of the categories.

Chapter 6 presents the summary; conclusions; comparison of findings to the literature and related research; discussion of the findings; implications; and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

The review of the related literature and studies in this chapter includes pertinent information on assistant principals at all levels since much of what has been written about assistant principals in junior high and senior high schools is applicable to elementary school assistant principals. Relatively little has been written specifically about elementary assistant principals.

The literature related to the assistant principalship generally focuses on the importance of the position, and problems associated with the position.

Importance of the Position

The importance of the position was suggested by Clements (1980:15):

> All educational leaders, but particularly the assistant principal, serving in that unique position which often bridges the gap between management and faculty, may well be the most effective educational leader to spearhead a rededication to positive action.

Some writers have observed a change in function of the assistant principal. Rankin (1973:73) recommended that the title of assistant principal should be replaced with the term "associate principal" because "the job of assistant principal

no longer exists but that we now have one of co-administrators."

Many of the articles suggested ways to enhance the role of the assistant principal. The use of an administrative team approach to school administration was often advocated. Gross, Shapiro, and Meehan (1980:27) observed that reduced administrator mobility and closed schools have increased the length of time many assistant principals remain in their positions and suggested that the assistantship can be enhanced by utilizing a management team concept in which assistant principals are real working partners in the management of the school. Rankin (1973) stressed cooperation and communication rather than competition between principals and assistant principals. In concurrence with Rankin, Sprague (1973:28) stated:

> Not only does the team approach have the potential of alleviating many frustrations of assistant principals and making the job a more attractive career position, but it enhances effective communication, decision making, and supervision within a school.

For the administrators to function as a team, Sprague suggested, requires cooperative setting of roles, responsibilities, and goals; weekly administrative meetings; openness and honesty among members of the administrative team; and communication with other members of the staff.

Childress (1973:9) also stressed the desirablity of an administrative team, but in addition felt that role definition for the assistant principal is essential.

Other suggestions for enhancing the role of the assistant principal included becoming involved in student relations activities, and curriculum and instruction. Stokes (1973:65) urged that through becoming committed to and involved in student relations activities, the assistant principal can establish an image as an instructional leader. Burgess (1973:52) advised that through extensive work in curriculum, assistant principals can gain on-the-job satisfactions as well as become qualified for additional career opportunities such as "director of instruction, consultant on curriculum or scheduling, program analyst, or coordinator of new programs." Turner (1973:55) stated that the assistant principal can help the principal meet the demands of accountability and assessment in an increasingly complex school system through coordinating curriculum and instruction. Potter (1980:13) stated:

> The utilization of assistant principals should be designed to best serve the needs of a given school community. They should have opportunities for a wide range of professional experiences which will provide the best possible preparation and training for upward mobility and/or a career assistant principalship.

Valentine (1980:43) suggested that principals have an obligation to groom and help develop their assistants for the principalship. He further suggested that the measure of success of principals "will be those persons whom you have employed and helped to develop into outstanding administrators."

Some of the literature focused on how to become an assistant principal. Gallant (1980:31) reported on a study of female assistant principals. "The assistant principalship is often the initial administrative appointment on the career ladder of school administration." It was found that prior experience as a guidance counselor or active roles as coaches or activity sponsors will increase the likelihood of appointment to assistant principal.

Problems Associated With the Position

The problems associated with the position of assistant principal tend to dominate the literature. Culver (1978:112) stated, "There is an injustice being committed in school administration, and unless some determined steps are taken to correct it, a vital member of the administrative team will be rendered virtually ineffective." This author maintained that the assistant principal should function as more than merely the school disciplinarian as is often the case. Bordinger (1973:11) suggested that since the assistant principal does largely clerical and disciplinary work, "He has little positive contact with students and is rarely recognized for his contributions." He maintained that there is now a stigma attached to the position of assistant principal. Bordinger (1973:11) stated:

> This has created a professional with a negative self-image, who is generally dissatisfied and unimpressed with his role.

> As a result, few intend to make it their career.
> Significant also is the void in meaningful college courses and in-service training programs to prepare professionals for the position of assistant principal. Practitioners have a difficult time explaining such a lack of professional preparation. Perhaps this, too, is an indication of the attitude regarding the importance of the position.

In a study conducted by Black (1980), it was found that there was a sense of frustration associated with a lack of time provided to complete assigned tasks. Seven years earlier, Bordinger (1973:11) stated:

> Of the many concerns assistant principals have regarding their position, none seems to concern them more than the work load or time involved in discharging their responsibilities. In most school systems, the tasks assigned far exceed a reasonable time allotment for their completion.

Another problem area identified in the literature is the dependency of the assistant principal on the principal for his work assignment and training. Bevan (1973:82), an assistant principal who sees himself as a middle man, listener, disciplinarian, and jack-of-all-trades, stated, "It is the principal's view of the assistant principalship that will determine what the assistant principal does and, to a degree, how he does it." Brown and Rentschler (1973:39) reported that the participants of an administrative workshop consisting of 120 elementary and secondary administrators and school superintendents felt that often the assistant principal does not get a desired promotion to principal because he is not prepared to assume the principalship. They

suggest that many times the principal has not given thought to preparing the assistant principal, or that "They prefer to assign him those duties with which they feel most uncomfortable and which have little visibility to the students, faculty, and general public." Brown and Rentschler make recommendations for assistant principals to gain more control over their own professional development.

Bordinger (1973:12-13) identified the principal as being in a position to change the image and responsibility of the assistant principal when he stated:

> However, if the principal views the position as essential to the functioning of a modern secondary school, if he is interested in changing the position to one of positive experiences and satisfactions which will tend to make the role rewarding and permanent, if he is interested in enhancing the character of the position so that it is not just to be endured, if he believes in the team approach to administration, if he insists that principals need training in working with the developing job descriptions for assistant principals, if he feels that there needs to be more uniformity from school to school regarding assignments essentially in the same manner of uniformity in the position of principal and superintendent, if he realizes that he needs to recognize and praise his contributions, then there is indeed an excellent chance for change.

Research in Alberta

Research studies done in Alberta have identified many of the problems associated with the role and have provided suggestions for addressing these problems.

McLeod (1959) surveyed 101 principals and assistant principals of elementary and junior high schools. He found that the duties of the assistant principal were not clearly defined, that the function of the assistant principal was primarily one of assisting the principal in his responsibilities, and that a great deal was expected of assistant principals who had heavy teaching loads and little time scheduled for administrative duties. McLeod (1959:160) also found that "Principals are largely responsible for the administrative training received by assistant principals in their school system." He recommended that central office provide principals with definite direction in this area. McLeod (1959:iv) further recommended that "many of the duties assumed by assistant principals could be delegated to or shared with the school staff, and many other routine duties could be assumed by competent stenographic assistance." He also suggested that the assistant principal be granted more time for administrative duties.

In his survey of superintendents, principals, and vice principals, Enns' (1959:iii) concluded:

> As presently conceived, the position neither provided adequate assistance for the principal, nor effective training for teachers preparing for school leadership. Instead of receiving carefully planned experience to fit them for promotion, vice-principals were either teaching most of the time or performing duties which could have been carried out by other teachers or clerical assistants. School systems had no clearly defined policies regarding either the duties or the in-service training of vice-principals.

Fenske's 1963 study of principals, vice-principals, and secretaries who maintained diaries for three months, found that there was an apparent lack of leadership and general lack of a distinct role for the vice-principal.

Longmore's (1968:iii) British Columbia survey study of vice-principals, principals, and district superintendents in ninety-four schools found that although the vice-principalship was considered a necessary administrative position, "the lack of definition of the position resulted in vice-principals performing a number of functions that were of a clerical or routine nature." The analysis of Longmore's study indicated that "school administrators as a group have not recognized the potential of the vice-principalship for the training of school leaders." (iii) Additionally, Longmore found that few women were appointed and that no increase was predicted.

In Collett's (1969) study of the role of the assistant principal in one large urban high school, he collected data through a Q-sort questionnaire which required six assistant principals, the principal, teachers, and central office administrators to rate sixty-one administrative tasks. He found that "In general, tasks related to students were found to be operationally higher than they were prescribed or perceived, while tasks related to teachers were operationally lower than prescribed or perceived." (iv) Collett (1969:175) concluded that "assistant principals within a large composite

high school have left far behind them the roles of clerical assistant and supervisor of extracurricular activities..."

Windsor's (1976:127) survey of sixty-six elementary principals and sixty-three elementary assistant principals revealed:

> Both principals and assistant principals appeared to see the assistantship as a vehicle through which training to become a principal should occur. Furthermore, the majority of administrators were of the opinion that the position was at least adequate for preparing an individual for the principalship. However, there were some disparate views as principals tended to see the purpose of providing planned, supervised training experiences as operative within the assistantship whereas assistant principals did not hold that opinion.

Windsor concluded that "The most serious drawback to the position as a vehicle for training was the lack of scheduled time." She further found that assistant principals seemed to be performing all the duties considered to be meaningful training experiences except for "(a) looking after the school budget, and (b) assessing teacher performance." (128)

Powell's (1978:iv) survey of twenty-nine secondary assistant principals "indicated a need for additional training for incumbents and newly-appointed assistant principals, increased involvement in curriculum development, and more rotation of duties." (127) Powell recommended institution of in-service programs related to the various duties of the assistant principal which would "result in a sharing of information among the participants, in addition to

the knowledge gained through the instructional content of the programs." (109)

In a more recent survey of 166 senior high school assistant principals, Newton (1983:67) concluded that "A leadership-management dichotomy seems to exist among assistant principals in senior high schools in Alberta." Newton found that assistant principals perceived themselves to be least competent in areas related to Curriculum and Instruction and Staff Personnel, although these areas were rated high in importance. Further, he concluded that deficiencies are not likely to be overcome by practical experiences on the job.

SUMMARY

It becomes apparent upon reviewing the literature that the role of the assistant principal is multi-faceted. The position is viewed as fulfilling an essential role, particularly when it is as a member of an administrative team. The problems associated with the position include: lack of role definition, lack of time for administrative duties, relegation to disciplinary and clerical duties, and a dependency on the principal for training which can result in a lack of exposure to varied experiences.

Generally, the literature indicates a need for attention to the role of the assistant principal and for a reassessment of the role in order to have it make a productive

contribution to the leadership of the school. Kriekard and Norton (1980:1) suggested that "Defining the assistant principalship is elusive, at best. The problem perhaps is due in part to the limited attention that has been directed to the study of this significant administrative role in education." The findings and reports of the related literature formed the basis of thinking and the basis for the investigation of the role of the elementary assistant principal.

Although the assistant principal has been the the subject of research studies and the topic of administrative conferences it may be that as suggested by Reed and Conners (1982:466):

> ...the nature of the role of the vice principal has escaped clear conceptualization... This line of inquiry has not been particularly fruitful because most of the survey instruments are designed around a conception of what the role ought to be and, hence, do not allow for discovering the characteristics of the role and its relationship to the organization.

In concurrence with Reed and Conners, this study attempted to discover the characteristics of the role through in-depth, qualitative methods.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the design and conduct of this research, including a rationale for the use of qualitative methods.

Methodology Considerations

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of the elementary school assistant principal. The researcher wondered if there were aspects of the role that had not been addressed by the use of survey instruments, which appeared to dominate the research done on assistant principalships. Further, it was thought that in-depth interviewing of people in the position could provide greater understanding and an enlightened vision of their reality within the role. The assistant principal's views, feelings, and reflections in their own terms might provide other insights and perspectives of the administrative role of the assistant principal in the elementary school. Based on the reality for six assistant principals in the field, a clearer understanding could potentially provide implications for future directions in educational research, policies, and thinking regarding the second in command position in school administration. This

was the thinking which motivated the researcher to select a field research qualitative design as the most appropriate method to address the purpose of the study.

The selection of appropriate methods for the purpose of the study was advocated by Patton (1980:19):

> The issues of selecting methods is no longer one of the dominant paradigm versus the alternative paradigm, of experimental designs with quantitative measurement versus holistic-inductive designs based on qualitative measurement. The debate and competition between paradigms is being replaced by a new paradigm---a paradigm of choices. The paradigm of choices recognizes that different methods are appropriate for different situations.

In identifying the essence of qualitative research, Glaser and Strauss (1967), Guba and Lincoln (1981), Patton (1980), and Bogdan and Biklin (1982) write in terms of grounded theory, the naturalistic paradigm, emergent design and data with depth, detail, and relevance.

Glaser and Strauss (1967:1) addressed the discovery of theory from data, systematically obtained and analyzed in social research. They stated:

> We believe that the discovery of theory from data---which we call grounded theory---is a major task confronting sociology today, for, as we shall try to show, such a theory fits empirical situations, and is understandable to sociologists and layman alike. Most important, it works---provides us with relevant predictions, explanations, interpretations and applications.

Guba and Lincoln (1981:65) summarized the derivative postures of the naturalistic paradigm: the preferred

techniques are qualitative; the quality criterion is relevance; the source of theory is grounded in reality; the question of causality is "Does x cause y in a natural setting?"; the knowledge types used are propositional and tacit; the stance is expansionist; and the purpose is discovery. They further summarized the methodological characteristics: the instrument is often the inquirer; the timing of the specification of data collection and analysis rules are during and after inquiry; the design is emergent; the style is selection; the setting is natural; the treatment is variable; the analytic units are patterns; and contextual elements are invited interference.

Patton (1980:22) described qualitative measurement. He stated:

> Qualitative measurement has to do with the kinds of data or information that are collected. Qualitative data consist of detailed descriptions of situations, events, people, interactions, and observed behaviours; direct quotations from people about their experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts; and excerpts or entire passages from documents, correspondence, records, and case histories. The detailed descriptions, direct quotations, and case documentation of qualitative measurement are raw data from the empirical world. The data are collected as open-ended narrative without attempting to fit program activities or peoples' experiences into predetermined, standardized categories such as the response choices that comprise typical questionnaires or tests.

The characteristics of qualitative research were described by Bogdan and Biklin (1982:27-30). Characteristics which are pertinent to this study are condensed and

summarized. Bogdan and Biklin stated:

> 1. Qualitative research has the natural setting as the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument... In addition, mechanically recorded materials are reviewed in their entirety by the researcher with the researcher's insight being the key instrument for analysis....
>
> 2. Qualitative research is descriptive. The data collected is in the form of words or pictures rather than numbers. The written results of the research contain quotations from the data to illustrate and substantiate the presentation... The qualitative research approach demands that the world be approached with the assumption that nothing is trivial, that everything has the potential of being a clue which might unlock a more comprehensive understanding of what is being studied....
>
> 3. Qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than simply with outcomes or products. How do people negotiate meaning: How do certain terms and labels come to be applied? How do certain notions come to be taken as part of what we know as "common sense"? What is the natural history of the activity or events under study?
>
> 4. Qualitative researchers tend to analyze data inductively. They do not search out data or evidence to prove or disprove hypotheses they hold before entering the study; rather, the abstractions are built as the particulars that have been gathered are grouped together... The qualitative researcher plans to use part of the study to learn what the important questions are.
>
> 5. "Meaning" is of essential concern to the qualitative approach. Researchers who use this approach are interested in the ways different people make sense out of their lives. In other words, qualitative researchers are concerned with what are called participant perspectives. They focus on questions like: What assumptions do people make about their lives? What do they take for granted?... By learning the perspectives of the participants, qualitative research

> illuminates the inner dynamics of situations ---dynamics that are often invisible to the outsider.

The researcher was guided in this study by the thinking and procedures presented by the above writers and others in the field of qualitative research design.

SELECTION OF SUBJECTS

As with most qualitative studies conducted by graduate students, time and depth of focus require limiting the number of subjects. Six elementary school assistant principals, two assistant principals from elementary schools in each of three school jurisdictions, with a varied amount of experience and a mix of three male and three female, provided the basis for the study. The subjects were purposively selected primarily on the basis of availability and accessibility (Patton, 1980) and (LeCompte, 1982). All subjects were volunteers, approached by the researcher only. They were unknown to the researcher prior to the study. They participated in the study with the consent of, but not on the request of, their respective principal and central office. Their names were suggested by colleagues who knew of an assistant principal in the various jurisdictions. In one case, the name of the assistant principal was selected from the list of elementary schools in that jurisdiction.

The subjects were contacted by telephone and asked if they would be willing to participate in the study as verbally

described. Generally, the first reaction was one of concern about the time involved, however, upon further discussion of the study and mutually convenient times, they agreed to participate.

The three school jurisdictions (one public district, one separate district, and one county) in the same general geographic location were arbitrarily selected for ease of access. A variety of type and size of jurisdiction was intended to provide wider perspectives of the current role of the assistant principal in the elementary school.

DATA COLLECTION

The major data collection technique was the field research strategy of semi-structured and open-ended in-depth interviews. The open-ended questions and emergent design were used in an attempt to avoid directing, controlling, or narrowing the information potentially available from the subjects. The semi-structured questions were used to initiate the flow of conversation and to gain opinions and thoughts on areas not initially and naturally addressed by participants in the description of the role.

In-depth Interviewing

The purpose of interviewing, according to Patton (1980:196) is "to find out what is in and on someone else's

mind....to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective."

The advantages of interviewing for data collection were outlined by Guba and Lincoln (1981:187):

> The interviewer is likely to receive more accurate responses on sensitive issues, and the interview itself is likely to provide a more complete and in-depth picture than other forms of inquiry. The interview format is more flexible than other approaches to data gathering and provides wide latitude within which the respondent's responses can be explored and fruitful leads exploited. The technique provides for continuous assessment and evaluation of information by the inquirer, allowing him to redirect, probe, and summarize. Unstructured interviews in particular provide a picture of the event or thing in question in the respondent's own words and terms, his "natural language." Face-to-face encounters of the sort embodied in unstructured interviewing also allow for a maximum of rapport to be built between interviewer and respondent.

Pilot Study

The researcher conducted a pilot study with two assistant principals who were not in the actual study. This enabled the researcher to gain experience with interviewing for the purpose of this study and to try out: the interview guide, the use of a tape recorder, the use of field notes during and after the interview, and the analysis techniques. The researcher was able to refine the interview guide and through previous use of the guide, became familiar with it so that only a glance at the end of an interview was necessary

to check that major areas had been explored. The pilot subjects felt that the interview guide questions were helpful in starting them talking and that there was full scope for expression of their own thoughts and feelings.

The researcher asked for and was given suggestions by the pilot subjects for getting the most out of the interviews in the study. As a result of the pilot study, the interviewer felt more comfortable and confident in conducting interviews. More explanation of the study purposes and procedures was given at the beginning of the interview, as was suggested by a pilot subject, so that subjects would understand and feel less threatened in "baring their souls."

The pilot study enabled the researcher to gauge the time reasonably required for the interview which was valuable for suggesting a time allotment when the interviews were being scheduled.

It became evident to the researcher, that having people who were previously unknown to the researcher would be preferable to using friends or acquaintances as subjects as a means of avoiding bias of either the interviewer or interviewee. Richardson, Dohrenwend, and Klein (1965:110) stated:

> It has long been recognized that individuals who meet as strangers and form a relationship which both know to be transitory may reveal confidences which they would not reveal to acquaintances or to anyone with whom they foresee a continuing relationship.

The researcher used a colleague in the pilot study who

was valuable for both perspectives of the role and for advice regarding the research design. The researcher selected a stranger for a second pilot member to reduce or eliminate friendship, and collegial effects of the first pilot member. It was decided that the use of strangers as subjects for the actual study would be preferable.

Procedure

The subjects were initially contacted to be members of the study in February and March, 1984. Upon their acceptance and approval, the researcher contacted the respective school principal for permission to enter the school for the study and to interview the principal for their view of assistant principalships. Forms were submitted to Field Services at the University of Alberta for approval of the jurisdictions involved. Approvals were granted. The assistant principals were contacted again and times were arranged for the interviews. The interviews were scheduled between May 2, 1984 and May 14, 1984. Typically, a half day was set aside for the basic interviews. The taped data ranged from ninety minutes to three hours per interview. After the interviews with assistant principals, interview times were scheduled with the principals and central office staff to discuss the role of the assistant principal. These interviews were generally one hour in length.

The Interview

In-depth interviewing, as the major data collection technique allowed the researcher to meet with the subjects face-to-face. It allowed the researcher to establish rapport with the subjects. As the subjects began talking, various topics, views, and feelings began to emerge. The researcher was able to listen for comparative aspects from one interview to the next. Each situation, each person, had something significant to offer. By listening carefully, and probing for clarification and expansion, the researcher was able to build upon what was being said and was able to discover further aspects of the role. The interviews seemed to flow and emerge, each one contributing to the next and building on the last. The initial categories of perspectives developed throughout the interviews.

The Interview Guide

The research questions stated in Chapter One formed the basis of the interview guide. Open-ended questions were used. Patton (1980:28) stated: "The purpose of gathering responses to open-ended questions is to enable the researcher to understand and capture the points of view of other people without predetermining those points of view through prior selection of questionnaire categories."

During each interview, other aspects which could be

applicable and pertinent to others in the position of assistant principal emerged. These were added to the general interview guide as areas to question and delve into in exhausting everything the subjects could say about their role. The interview guide was used in a manner suggested by Gorden (1975:75), "It may simply remind the interviewer of areas to be covered in his investigation."

The initial question was one about the subject's background and training. This easily started the subjects talking. Once the conversation had begun, all of the subjects appeared comfortable talking about their world. The researcher attempted to keep interjections and comments to a minimum. The subjects were encouraged to do the talking, the researcher merely probed to clarify and expand what was being said.

Although the guide was there, often it was referred to very little because the various topics were addressed naturally in the flow of conversation. When the subject would come to a stop in conversation in one topic due to exhaustive treatment of that topic, the researcher would allow a reflective pause for further thoughts or comments, then would suggest another area of discussion.

By the end of the interview, the interviewer could think of nothing further to ask or probe and the subject could think of nothing more to say. Comments like: "I am mentally drained"; "I can't think of another thing I could tell you";

"I hadn't even thought about all these things before"; "I have told you things that I've never said to anyone before"; and "You know more about me and my thoughts about my job than even my close friends know," indicated that the interview was exhaustive. According to Patton (1980:252), "A good interview lays open thoughts, feelings, knowledge, and experiences not only to the interviewer, but also to the interviewee."

There was also an opportunity for subjects to contact the interviewer about anything further that came to mind and for the interviewer to get back to the subjects for further reflections or clarification. This contact was made by phone.

The interview guide was kept open-ended and served as a means of probing in an exhaustive manner. This guide came to reflect the major areas of the interview data. It then served as a basis for initial coding of the interview transcripts.

Use of a Tape Recorder

With the consent of the subjects in the study, an audio tape recorder was used to record the interviews. The recorded tapes provided a verbatim record of what the subjects said, as suggested by Spradley (1979). They were also a means of reducing threats to internal reliability as recommended by LeCompte and Goetz (1982). The researcher's

experience in using a tape recorder was in agreement with Patton (1980:247) who stated:

> A tape recorder is part of the indispensable equipment of evaluators using qualitative methods. Tape recorders do not "tune out" conversations, change what has been said because of interpretation (either conscious or unconscious), or record words more slowly than they are spoken... In addition to increasing the accuracy of data collection, the use of a tape recorder permits the interviewer to be more attentive to the interviewee.

Bogdan and Biklin (1982:96) stressed the use of good quality equipment and stated: "The tape recorder must definitely be in good working order. You need to check your equipment both before and during an interview." The researcher used a Panasonic tape recorder Model No. RX-1960 with a built-in microphone and ninety minute Maxell tapes selected for high quality recording. The tape recorder was very small, ten centimeters by fifteen centimeters, and was relatively unobtrusive. It was always plugged in to a wall electrical outlet to ensure that it would record effectively and consistently. The researcher carried a standard length extension cord for use within a room and an extra long extension cord to use in the event that there was no plug-in in the room being used for the interview. This was the case once, but the interview was moved to another room, the counsellor's office, which was quieter, more comfortable, and had a plug-in. In every other case, the interview took place in the subject's own office.

At the outset of the interview, the researcher explained

the rationale for using a tape recorder, assured confidentiality of the taped material, and asked permission to tape. All assistant principals agreed with little or no hesitation. There was an awareness, to a varying degree, of the tape recorder at the beginning of the interview, but it was apparently ignored and forgotten as the interview progressed.

The tape recorder was placed on a desk or on a chair between the interviewer and the subject. The interviewer always checked that the tape recorder was running, that the record button was depressed, and that the red light was on. At the end of each side, the tape recorder made a whirring noise and then an audible click, so that the sides could be changed with little or no loss of conversation.

The tape recorder enabled the interviewer to maintain full eye contact with the subject, to listen intensely which allowed for meaningful probing, and to be assured that everything would be recorded accurately and completely.

Immediately upon leaving the school, the interviewer went to the car, wrote down immediate impressions of the situation and the interview, then while driving, used an in-car cassette player to check that the interview had been recorded and that the volume was adequate. The taping had been successful in each case so the review of the interview allowed for initial analysis and provided direction for the next interview. If there had been a problem with the taping,

the researcher was prepared to write as much as possible from memory and to check back with the subject. The procedures followed were suggested by Patton (1980:251) who stated:

> The period after the interview is critical to the rigor and validity of qualitative measurement... The period following an interview is a time for guaranteeing the quality of the data. The first thing to be done after an interview that has been recorded on tape is to check the tape to make sure it was functioning properly. If for some reason a malfunction occurred, the interviewer should immediately make extensive notes of everything that he or she can remember... this period after the interview is a critical time of reflection and elaboration. It is a time of quality control to guarantee that the data obtained will be useful, reliable, and valid.

In each case, after the interview, the subjects indicated approval regarding the use of a tape recorder and indicated that they preferred the eye contact to the extensive notetaking that would be required if a tape recorder had not been used.

Field Notes

The researcher used field notes following a modification of the format suggested by Spradley (1979) consisting of: a condensed account taken during the interview; an expanded account as soon as possible after each field session to fill in details and to recall things not recorded on the spot; a field work journal which contains a record of experiences, ideas, concerns, mistakes, personal biases, and feelings; and

analysis and interpretation notes. Instead of condensed notes during the interview, Patton's (1980) suggestion for writing key terms was followed initially. However, although the researcher had a pen and paper, key words were written down only on a couple of occasions as a reminder for probing, but in most cases nothing was written and the pen was at rest on the paper. The tape recorder provided assurance and removed potential anxiety at missing anything, to the extent that the probing came naturally to the researcher without reminders. Additionally, not writing during the interview added to the relaxed, conversational tone of the interview which seemed conducive to open communication. The subjects commented that the researcher's manner and relaxed, casual approach enabled them to speak freely and easily.

Notes were made immediately after the interview, then expanded notes were made later in the day. A field work journal was kept in which the researcher recorded experiences, ideas, concerns, mistakes, and personal reflections.

Other Data Collection Methods

Observation was used to add to the picture of the assistant principal's world. The researcher observed interaction between the assistant principal and other staff members in the staff room and in the main office prior to the interview. In one case, the interaction observed was

referred to by the assistant principal in discussing frustrations. Other opportunities for observation presented themselves as assistant principals talked on the phone, responded to requests, interacted with students, and interacted with principals. In one instance the researcher observed the principal and assistant principal conferring about a difficult situation regarding the disciplining of a problem student. Through the interruption of the interview and the subsequent observation, the team approach indicated in the interview, was verified as the principal came to the assistant principal for advice and discussion. The decision making process and support became evident in the slice of life situation that ensued.

Additionally, the physical setting of the assistant principal's office provided an opportunity to observe proximity, status, and environment. In one case, where the principal had the opportunity to design the administrative office space, it was interesting to note and later have the principal verify that the design of identical office and desk size were an indication of co-administration both symbolically and functionally.

Thirdly, the subjects nonverbal responses were observed. As pointed out by Richardson, Dohrenwend, and Klein (1965:13):

> ...careful observation of a respondent's nonverbal responses---his tone of voice, the hesitancy or positiveness of his response, his general attitude toward the interviewer---can

> produce information which will help the interviewer to appraise the accuracy and other characteristics of the respondent's verbal responses.

This form of observation was most valuable for probing, and for assessing areas of concern or value for the subjects.

Documents, as defined by Phillips (1971:147), "any written materials that may be used as a source of information about human behavior," were obtained from assistant principals, principals, and central office staff. These were studied to provide a further view of the world of the assistant principal. The policy statements and guidelines regarding assistant principals from the central offices of the jurisdictions are referred to in the description of context in Chapter Four. Written role descriptions, when available, were obtained from principals and assistant principals. They too, are referred to in Chapter Four.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data were analyzed through transcribing the tapes and coding the data to provide the findings of the study.

Transcribing the Tapes

The tapes were transcribed by the researcher. The time spent was extremely valuable as the researcher was able to think about what had been said at each of the interviews and was able to get both a microscopic and a panoramic view of

the role of the assistant principal through the eyes of the subjects involved. The time spent in isolation, listening to the interviews allowed the researcher to evaluate her effect and interaction with each subject. There was a great deal of listening and replaying of certain sections of the tapes. The researcher was able to reflect on what was being said, listen for the whys, make notes on possible categories and themes, as well as make notes on the implications for future thinking, policies, and studies.

The researcher used a word processor for the typing and printing of the interview data. A combination of summary and edited transcription was used following procedures outlined by Bogdan and Biklin (1982), Patton (1980), and Gorden (1975). The interviews started with general, factual, background facts, such as years of experience, education, and so on. As rapport developed and the conversation progressed, the interview data became more reflective, revealing thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Therefore, the transcription of the tapes were in a summary form at the beginning of the tape, pulling out the facts that described the setting of the subjects, the context of the perspectives, as presented in Chapter Four. As the interview progressed, the conversation was more reflective, so the transcription of the remainder of the taped material was done largely in edited form where the taped material was essentially transcribed word for word, editing out irrelevant words. The

word for word quotations formed the basis of the perspectives presented in Chapter Five.

All tapes were transcribed making note of the footage on the tape recorder and typing in that footage on the transcription, so that sections of the tape could easily be found. Also, any quotation which was used in the presentation of perspectives could be double checked for accuracy.

The sections were well spaced out to allow for coding and notemaking during the analysis.

Coding and Categorization

Patton (1980:246) stated: "Data interpretation and analysis involve making sense out of what people have said, looking for patterns, putting together what is said in one place with what is said in another place, and integrating what different people have said." In order to interpret and analyze the data as suggested by Patton (1980), coding and categorization was done as recommended by LeCompte and Goetz (1982:39), "Creating categories for coding is the first step of analysis, it is vital to the process of organizing the naturally occurring stream of behavior into manageable units." The procedures suggested by Bogdan and Biklin (1982) were essentially followed. The interview guide and notes made following the interviews provided the initial basis for the categories. The transcriptions were read through making

note of the significant topics that emerged from each one. These topics were added to the list of potential categories. The codes were numbered on a separate sheet, then the transcriptions were read word for word, and appropriate topic numbers were assigned and written in the margin. Anything that did not fit into the topics that had emerged were read and reflected upon to see if they would require creation of a new topic heading.

Once the topics had been assigned to the transcriptions, the researcher reflected on the essence of the categories to see what themes were evident from the data. Bogdan and Biklin (1982:173) discussed themes and topics. They stated, "A theme is some concept that emerges from your data: 'some signal trend, some master conception, or key distinction' (Mills, 1959, p.216)." They defined a topic, "Like the theme, the topic is pervasive in your notes, but it is more a unit of a particular aspect of what you were studying than an idea about it. A theme is conceptual; a topic is descriptive." They further added that, "These words seldom can be applied definitively to a focus in a given paper. Often the focus will be a hybrid, having elements of all three (thesis, a proposition you put forth and then argue; theme; and topic)." Five major themes emerged from the categories and comprehensively covered the general perspectives of the subjects. With the themes in mind, the coded transcripts were reread to check for relevance and fit.

The subjects were contacted, and the analysis and emergent themes were presented for comment and verification. The verification for validity by member checks was described by Guba and Lincoln (1981:186) "Host verification or member checks involve checking the experiences the researcher has had against the experiences and understandings of members of the group." LeCompte and Goetz (1982:47) stated: "Finally, in cases where presentation of the perspective of participants is important, ethnographers must demonstrate that the categories are meaningful to the participants, reflect the way participants experience reality, and actually are supported by the data." Bogdan and Biklin (1982:30) stated that, "Qualitative researchers are concerned with making sure they capture perspectives accurately." The themes seemed to reflect the reality of these subjects with minor individual differences or variations. All subjects reported that they could see themselves and that the themes presented an accurate picture of their perspectives.

Through interaction with colleagues about this study, other administrators in the field and other qualitative researchers provided verification of the techniques and of the perspectives. The analysis procedures, emergent topics and themes were discussed with one of the pilot subjects, with colleagues doing similar research, and particularly with a member of the thesis committee for suggestions and for verification of the utilization of suitable techniques which

would address both the purpose and trustworthiness of the study.

PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

The context of the perspectives are presented through a description of the situation or setting of each of the assistant principals involved. This includes a description of their time allotment, duties, training, experience, and of the policies and guidelines regarding the assistant principal within their school and their school district. Verbal confirmation of the accuracy of the information was also obtained from the subjects. The context of the perspectives is presented in Chapter Four.

The perspectives of the six assistant principals are presented through the themes described in Chapter Five. These perspectives are provided through the use of direct quotations. Patton (1980:28) stated:

> Direct quotations are a basic source of raw data in qualitative measurement, revealing respondents' level of emotion, the way in which they have organized their world, their thoughts about what is happening, their experiences, and their basic perceptions. The task for the qualitative methodologist is to provide a framework within which people can respond in a way that represents accurately and thoroughly their points of view about the world, or that part of the world about which they are talking...

The researcher attempted to include sufficient quotation to ensure understanding of the perspectives of the subjects

and to promote the credibility of the findings. Patton (1980:343) indicated that, "Sufficient description and direct quotations should be included to allow the reader to enter into the situation and thoughts of the people represented in the report."

TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

Many of the measures employed to ensure the trustworthiness of the study have been presented throughout the methodology chapter. However, a summary is presented here to outline the techniques utilized by the researcher. Guba and Lincoln (1981:103-127) presented ways that qualitative researchers can meet the tests of rigor. They summarized the aspects and appropriate terms as: truth value --- credibility; applicability --- fittingness; consistence ---auditability; and neutrality --- confirmability. In their discussion of reliability and validity in ethnographic research, LeCompte and Goetz (1982) indicated that comparability and translatability are crucial to the application of ethnographic research.

The reliability or replication of the interviews would be difficult to guarantee due to the human element of both the interviewer and the interviewees. LeCompte and Goetz (1982:35) stated, "because human behavior is never static, no study can be replicated exactly, regardless of the methods and designs employed." It is acknowledged that the

interaction and rapport would not be identical for even the same interviewer and interviewee. Additionally, people's perspectives can shift and vary from time to time depending upon their situation and frame of mind. The study design could be replicated by other researchers using the same or other subjects and perhaps the same perspectives would be found, and/or perhaps new perspectives would be discovered.

However, through description of those who provided the data and the setting or context where the data was collected, comparability is possible. Guba and Lincoln (1981:120) indicated that applicability could be assessed by considering the degree of fit between the working hypotheses, propositions that arise from a particular investigation, of the context in which they were generated and of the context in which they are to be applied. Through description of the research methods and procedures, translatability or auditability is possible.

Based on the data collected during this study, the credibility or truth value of the study is crucial. Credibility and neutrality were addressed by: structural corroboration through member checks and triangulation; awareness of effects of the researcher's presence and involvement with the subjects; awareness of possible researcher or subject bias; training of the researcher in interviewing and research techniques; careful recording and scrutiny of the data; and presentation of the findings

through direct quotation. Internal reliability was addressed through the use of mechanically recorded data, and peer examination. The field research interviews were done during the same month, thus reducing history and maturation threats. The researcher was trained in interviewing techniques through university courses: Educational Administration 521, Supervision of Personnel; and Educational Administration 512, Research Design. The researcher was aware of and attempted to minimize researcher effect and researcher bias. The researcher was of a similar age, educational background and professional position as were the subjects. The researcher was familiar and comfortable with the language used and the situations described by the subjects.

As sources of triangulation, people in different administrative positions, principals and central office staff, who had an influence on the assistant principal were interviewed; documents of stated policy and guidelines regarding the assistant principal were studied; and observation of interactions, physical setting, and nonverbal communication were used. These provided other views of the assistant principal and served to provide a more complete picture of their world.

The researcher agrees with LeCompte and Goetz (1982:55) who stated:

> Attaining absolute validity and reliability is an impossible goal for any research model. Nevertheless, investigators may approach these objectives by conscientious balancing of the

various factors enhancing credibility within the context of their particular research problems and goals.

The methods selected for this study were chosen in an attempt to appropriately address the purpose of the study in the most credible, valid, and truthful manner.

ETHICS

As the researcher began interviewing, the sense of responsibility for being highly ethical became profoundly evident. The ethical principles suggested by Bogdan and Biklin (1982), Guba and Lincoln (1981), and Spradley (1979) were adhered to by the researcher. Spradley's (1979:34-39) principles in summary form are: consider informants first; safeguard informant's rights, interests, and sensitivities; communicate research objectives; protect the privacy of informants; do not exploit informants; and make reports available to informants.

The researcher needs to assure confidentiality so that the subject feels comfortable in talking about the negative aspects as well as the positive aspects without threat. The researcher described how the study would be presented, that there would be no names used, that the perspectives would be grouped for presentation in a chapter separate from the subject descriptions, and that anything that could potentially make a subject vulnerable would be concealed or its use would be dependent upon approval of the person

involved.

The subjects appeared very open and honest, particularly as the interview progressed and trust was established. Confidential thoughts and experiences emerged at times, and the researcher felt a keen sense of responsibility to be highly ethical in the handling and presentation of the data. The transcription was always done in absolute privacy and the subjects were aware of who would have access to the information for validity checks.

Ethics are of prime importance in any research but particularly in a situation where trust is developed and confidentiality is assured.

CHAPTER 4

THE CONTEXT

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a description of the professional environment of the six assistant principals. It is anticipated that through this description of the context of the perspectives presented in Chapter 5, greater understanding of the study, and to a certain extent, generalizability, will be possible.

The chapter has a description of the school district including the approximate size, and policies regarding the role of the assistant principal. Information on selection, training, job description, and evaluation are provided for each district. This information is based on interviews with assistant superintendents, area superintendents, or supervisors of personnel in each of the central offices, as well as written documents from the respective operational handbooks. In some cases, the statements are taken verbatim from the handbooks, however, to assure confidentiality the source is not named.

A brief description of each assistant principal's situation, including the school size, and administrative and teaching duties, as well as their educational training and experience, is provided.

A description of the respective principals' comments

regarding the assistant principalship, based upon both their own past experience and present views is included.

All names have been changed or omitted to assure confidentiality.

SCHOOL DISTRICT A

This school district has a total teacher count of approximately 760 and a pupil count of approximately 12 600. Of the twenty-one schools that offer kindergarten to grade six, one does not have an assistant principal. Many have both an assistant principal who is second in authority to the principal and a vice principal who is third in authority. Minimum administrative appointments policy states that there shall be "an assistant principal at eight teachers and a vice-principal or additional assistant principals before twenty-two teachers." The administrative time granted to schools is one thirty-minute period for every nine students. The distribution of administrative time is decided upon by the principal usually in consultation with the assistant principal and vice-principal if applicable. Assistant principals receive an administrative allowance equivalent to 60% of the principal's administrative allowance. Vice-prinicpals receive the equivalent of 50% of the principal's administrative allowance.

Selection

Persons interested in administrative careers submit a general administration application which is kept on file in an "administrative pool." When interested in a specific position, candidates notify central office requesting that their file be activated for this position.

There is a written policy in the operational handbook for schools regarding the appointment of administrators. The criteria for selection include: education; training and preparation; experience; personal attributes; leadership potential; organizational ability; position suitability; principal's expectations; career plans; public relations; and references. The weighting of the criteria used is not necessarily uniform and is dependent upon the specific position to be filled.

The method employed is as follows:

1. The initial paper screening is done by a committee consisting of the Deputy Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent (Personnel), and Assistant Superintendent (Curriculum and Instruction).
2. The "short list" is presented to the Superintendent.
3. If the position to be filled is that of an assistant or a vice-principal, input from the principal is obtained.
4. Interviews are held if deemed necessary by the Superintendent or his designate.
5. Prior to the notification of employment, the name is presented to the school trustee for the area concerned and if time permits also to the Personnel Committee and/or to the School Board.

There have been rare exceptions, but experience as an

assistant principal is usually a prerequisite in the selection of principals.

Training

There is no formal training program at present. Training is considered to be on the job, through the principal. School District A anticipates that a specified training program will be established within the next two years.

Evaluation

The assistant principalship is an acting position for the first year. A successful evaluation is required for the acting position to become a continuing assistant principalship. The evaluation is informal and consists of an interview with the principal and the assistant principal by central office staff.

Duties

There is a general policy statement of the duties and responsibilities of assistant principals and vice principals in the operational handbook for schools. It states that:

> The assistant principal and the vice-principal assist with the administrative duties and responsibilities as assigned by the principal. Although their responsibilities vary, the broad categories of their functions may be:

> educational, executive, managerial, and public relations. Even though each member of the administrative team may have specific assigned duties and responsibilities, each has the additional responsibility of contributing to the effective and efficient operation of the school. When the principal is absent, the assistant principal shall assume the duties and responsibilities of the principal. When both the principal and the assistant principal are absent, the vice-principal shall assume the duties and responsibilities of the principal.

General Comments

School District A felt that the assistant principal does fulfill a definite need and that the position is a training ground for future principals. Also, that perhaps not enough is demanded of principals in providing a variety of tasks for the assistant principal and vice-principal. This may be a requirement in future school evaluations. School evaluations and administration evaluations now assess the extent to which the administration within a school operates as an administrative team.

Inter-visitations of the assistant principal to different schools are possible and are done at the request of individual assistant principals.

It is predicted that there will be a change in the role of the assistant principal. Since there is a trend toward a greater emphasis on the evaluation of program and staff within schools, the assistant principal will need to become more involved in evaluation.

Assistant Principal 1-A

Assistant Principal 1-A has taught for twenty-one years, fourteen of which he has been an elementary school assistant principal. He has a Bachelor of Education degree. He was an assistant principal at one school for eleven years and has been at his present school for three years.

This school has 284 students in kindergarten to grade six. There are 16.6 certified staff equivalents including the principal and the assistant principal. There is a learning assistance teacher who has 60% time, an opportunity room teacher who is full-time, a counsellor who has 50% time, and a speech therapist who has 10% time. There is also a library clerk who has 70% time.

The assistant principal is assigned 58% administrative time and 42% teaching time. He teaches grade six math, science, health, and grade five science.

The principal has 70% administrative time and 30% teaching time. He teaches grade six math.

The principal and the assistant principal mutually decide on the distribution of duties based on what has to be done and who is best able or would most like to do it. The basic duties of the assistant principal include: making morning announcements; coordinating grade group curriculum meetings, track meet, and science fair; setting up timetables; and communicating with staff and students for the smooth running of the school. The principal and the assistant

principal work together to develop the budget, then the assistant principal keeps track of the budget book. Discipline is handled by both the assistant principal and the principal, depending on who is available. Serious cases are decided mutually. The assistant principal assumes the duties and responsibilities of the principal in his absence.

The Principal of 1-A

The principal of 1-A taught for 14 years before getting an assistant principalship. He was an assistant principal for six years, three years each with two different principals. One of those six years was frustrating---he had little responsibility and little administrative time. The other years were very good. His best experience was where he was assigned jobs and was given the responsibility to do what he had been assigned. He has been a principal for eleven years.

One of the changes he has seen through the years regarding the assistant principalship has been direction from central office as to administrative time allotment. Central office suggested a three-way split whereby the principal gets two-thirds of the administrative time and the assistant principal gets one-third of the administrative time.

He credits central office with selecting, for a school, administrators who complement one another. He also thinks that they pick principals who can train the next round of

administrators as well as run the school effectively.

He feels that the assistant principalship is a training ground for future principals and definitely sees it as his job and his challenge to effectively train his assistant principal for promotion.

He feels that the assistant principal role is essential to the running of the school. Also, as a training ground for future principals, the assistant principalship cannot be matched. In the principal's absence, an assistant principal can best see to the running of the school. He feels strongly that the principal and the assistant principal should be partners, working as a team.

When looking for an assistant principal, he wants someone who: complements his strengths and weaknesses; has opinions and is willing to express them; is organized, industrious, and wants to learn; and is willing to try out ideas, and to take risks.

Assistant Principal 2-A

Assistant Principal 2-A has been teaching for ten years, three years of which she has been an elementary school assistant principal at her present school. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Bachelor of Education degree from India and a Bachelor of Education degree in Canada, as well as six half-courses in Educational Administration.

This school has 463 students in grades three to seven

presently. It is considered to be an elementary school, but the grades shift according to the need and facilities in this area. There are 27.7 teacher equivalents including the counsellor who is full-time; a full-time corrective reading/learning assistance teacher; a teacher librarian who has 70% time; a full-time enclosed learning assistance teacher; and a full-time opportunity room teacher, the principal, assistant principal, and vice principal.

The assistant principal has 64% administrative time and 36% teaching time. She teaches language arts to a grade six homeroom class.

The principal has 86% administrative time and 14% teaching time. There is also a vice principal who has 36% administrative time and 64% teaching time.

The administrative time is distributed by the principal. The administrative duties are decided by the three administrators. The assistant principal is responsible for ordering supplies and materials; supervision of instruction in language arts and special education; coordinating janitorial services; screening secretarial services; and classroom supervision. The discipline duties are shared and are handled by any of the three administrators, depending upon who is available. The assistant principal assumes the duties and responsibilities of the principal in his absence.

The Principal of 2-A

This principal taught for three years before becoming an assistant principal. He was an assistant principal for five years but was not granted any administrative time. His responsibilities were minimal, but any duties were performed outside of school hours since he was teaching full-time. He has been a principal for nineteen years.

Over the years he has seen an increase in involvement with curriculum and supervision of teachers. He feels that as the demand for evaluation of schools and programs increases, the assistant principal may be required to take on more of this in the future.

He sees the assistant principal as being very essential to him as a principal, especially as a liason person between teachers and the principal. The assistant principal is able to sense the position of the staff on various issues and therefore provide valuable advice. The assistant principal is also valuable as someone to bounce ideas off---to provide that other point of view. The assistant principalship should be a learning experience for leadership in the school. He sees it as part of his role to train the assistant principal by providing a variety of experiences so that the assistant can run the school and handle all situations in the absence of the principal. He feels that there is a lot to learn, but in four or five years, the assistant principal should learn enough that he would feel ready to move up to a principalship.

The characteristics that he looks for in an assistant principal are: someone who is hard-working, who can get along with most of the staff most of the time, and who can complement the strengths and weaknesses of the principal.

SCHOOL DISTRICT B

This school district has approximately 1500 teachers and a pupil count of approximately 27 400. Of the 74 schools that provide education for kindergarten to grade six, nine do not have an assistant principal. Schools with eight or more teachers have an assistant principal. Schools with twenty-five or more teachers have a second assistant principal. The general administrative time granted to schools is one full time equivalent administrator for every 300 students. The distribution of the administrative time is worked out between the principal and the assistant principal and is based on what their respective duties will be. The assistant principal receives an allowance equivalent to 60% of the principal's administrative allowance; a second assistant principal receives the equivalent of 50% of the principal's allowance.

Selection

Individuals who are interested in pursuing an administrative career are required to complete the

application forms for an educational administrative position.

School District B has a comprehensive written policy booklet regarding the application, regulation, and guidelines for administrative appointments. There are criteria for selection with points allotted for each criterion out of a total of 57 points. The criteria for selection and the weighting of points include: the principal's recommendation --- ten points; a school staff opinion survey --- fifteen points; a central administration assessment interview --- ten points; faith commitment --- five points; philosophy of education --- five points; professional training --- five points; educational experience --- five points; extracurricular, co-curricular and community involvement --- two points.

The procedure is implemented by an administrative candidates committee, consisting of three central office administrative staff who are appointed by the superintendent and three teacher representatives who are selected by the A.T.A. Local and who are ineligible for an administrative appointment during their term of office. The function of the administrative candidates committee is:

1. To screen initial applications for eligibility.
2. To establish a rank ordering of eligible administrative candidates for principalship and assistant principalship from the numerical values placed on the required data received from each candidate.
3. To confirm that the rank ordering, as prepared by this committee, is utilized to

make new school administrative appointments.
4. To enable teacher representatives to report to the A.T.A. Local.
The committee provides the rank ordering of the administrative candidates to the superintendent for placement prior to the recommendations going to the Board of Trustees for ratification in the spring of each year.

In the majority of cases, assistant principals apply for and are selected for principalships. In rare occasions principals may be drawn from other positions such as department heads.

Training

There is no formal training program for assistant principals. The training is considered to be done on the job through the principal. Inservice programs are conducted every second year for interested candidates prior to submitting applications. First year principals and assistant principals attend an inservice program of approximately twenty hours consisting of sessions on finances, budgeting, evaluation, student services and records, religious programs, and staff personnel. School District B anticipates that these sessions will be increased and broadened as evaluation within schools becomes more evident.

Evaluation

Persons who are in first year administrative positions

are considered to be in acting positions. They are appraised during that year and must indicate in writing whether or not they are interested in being considered for a permanent administrative position the following year. The appraisal consists of a general written statement by the principal regarding the assistant principal's effectiveness in that role. The report is submitted to the area superintendent and one copy is given to the assistant principal. Based on the report, the area superintendent makes recommendation for continuing designation to the superintendent and the board of trustees.

Duties

There is a general policy statement for the duties of the assistant principal. It states that:

> 1. The assistant principal, in addition to teaching duties, shall have administrative and supervisory duties assigned by the principal and he shall be responsible to the principal in the discharge of such duties and responsibilities.
> 2. In the absence of the principal, the assistant principal shall assume the duties, responsibilities, and authority of the principal.

The role description is worked out between the principal and assistant principal as each school is thought to be unique.

General Comments

The assistant principal role is seen as essential to the successful operation of the schools particularly as part of an administrative team. It is a supportive role for principals who have an increased work load due to added responsibility for community involvement and for professional development of teachers. The role is also considered to be a necessary training ground for future principals.

It is thought that in the future, the assistant principal will take on more of the professional leadership role as the principal does more in the area of evaluation. Assistant principals are now assisting in the appraisals of teachers in some cases.

Assistant Principal 3-B

Assistant Principal 3-B has taught for ten years and is presently in her first year as an elementary school assistant principal. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree, a Professional Diploma After Degree, and a Graduate Diploma in Reading and Language.

This school has 250 students in kindergarten to grade six. There are 12.4 teacher equivalents including the principal, assistant principal, a counsellor who has 50% time; two resource room teachers who have 50% time each. There is an aide who has 40% time in the library and 40% time

as an assisting aide for split classes.

The assistant principal has 20% administrative time and 80% teaching time. She has a grade six homeroom class in which she teaches all subjects except French, social studies, and religion.

The principal has 70% administrative time and 30% teaching time. He teaches the assistant principal's class social studies and religion, as well as teaching an enrichment class.

The principal and the assistant principal talked about what the assistant principal would feel comfortable doing in determining the duties of the assistant principal. The assistant principal has been responsible for: patrols, textbook rentals, the literature program, library activities, special events such as contests and field days, materials and testing supplies, working informally with teachers and students, and working on a discipline program stressing responsibility. Discipline problems are dealt with by both the principal and the assistant principal. The assistant principal assumes the duties and responsibilities of the principal in his absence.

The Principal of 3-B

The principal of 3-B taught for five years before becoming an assistant principal. He was an assistant principal for four years in three different schools. He

basically enjoyed his experiences as an assistant principal but remembers that he worked "awfully hard" particularly for the first and second years. He was doing programming, timetabling, and many extracurricular activities. He favorably remembers that he had the confidence of his first principal who gave him a lot of authority, and let him have a "lot of rope."

He feels that through the years the schools have taken on much more of the total education of children and that administrators spend a great deal of time programming and managing all the extras that seem to fall on the schools now. He feels also, that administration is much more aware of the qualities and effectiveness of teachers.

He feels that the role of the assistant principal is essential to him primarily as a liason with staff and students. He sees the training of the assistant principal as an important part of his role. He feels that assistant principals tend to pick up a lot through observation but that they also need to talk about and analyze what they are learning.

If he had the opportunity to select an assistant principal, he would look for someone who could see a number of viewpoints, who was flexible, a jack-of-all-trades who wouldn't mind moving about with courses and curriculum, someone who was willing to do extracurricular activities, and someone who has discretion.

In view of the limited number of principalships available to aspiring educators, this principal feels that there may be a need to redefine the role and to use a different title for those wishing to move up into a principalship and those wishing to be career assistant principals. The title "assistant principal," he feels should indicate an internship program for those intending to and preparing for moving up to a principalship.

Assistant Principal 4-B

Assistant Principal 4-B has taught for ten years, three of which he has been an assistant principal. He was an assistant principal in an elementary/junior high school for two years and has been at this elementary school for the current school year. He has a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Bachelor of Education degree.

This school has 263 students in kindergarten to grade six. There are sixteen certified staff including the principal and the assistant principal. There are eleven full-time teachers and three part-time teachers including a counsellor who has 40% time, a resource room teacher who has 40% time, and a full-time learning center teacher. There is a clerk typist librarian who has 30% time.

The assistant principal has 40% administrative time and teaches 60% of the time. He teaches a grade five homeroom class language arts, math, and physical education, as well as

a grade three physical education class.

The principal has 60% administration time and teaches the 40% resource room time.

The principal wrote out what she wanted the assistant principal to do, they talked about it and revised the list of duties to include working with the budget. The assistant principal's duties include: textbook rental; ordering of any textbook related supplies; playground related discipline; teacher supervision schedules; curriculum and supplies for upper elementary language arts, and all of the school's science and physical education; some classroom observation and first year teachers appraisals; and finances in consultation with the principal. General discipline problems may be handled by either administrator and serious cases are handled by both the assistant principal and principal. The assistant principal assumes the duties and responsibilities of the principal in her absence.

The Principal of 4-B

The principal of 4-B was granted an honorary position as an assistant principal when she was nineteen years old. She had a Bachelor of Arts degree then and feels that is why she got the position. She was not granted any administrative time nor duties. Following that she was an assistant principal in an elementary/junior high school for three years. She had two thirty-five minutes periods a week for

administration time and remembers it as an unhappy time. She made up her mind not to have anyone experience what she did as an assistant principal. She has been a principal for sixteen years.

She felt that principals in those days were looked on as demi-gods but today feels that is not so, that administrators are more servants to teachers. She feels that administrators today operate more as a team, but that the final responsibility still rests with the principal. She feels that assistant principals should be included as members of the administrators' association.

The role of the assistant principal is essential to the principal, she suggested, because besides the added strengths and abilities, the principalship can be a lonely job, and the sharing through an administrative team can be a real asset. She feels that there should be a balance between men and women in an administrative team and that their abilities should complement one another.

She sees it as her role to train the assistant principal. She talks to them to determine what they have done, what they would like to do and tries to ensure that everything would be covered over a three year period as preparation for a principalship. She has not yet met anyone who wants to be a career assistant principal. She feels that the assistant principal role should be more defined at the system level.

If she was able to select her own assistant principal, she would look for someone who is energetic, "has lots of personality," cares about children and teachers, has a broad experience and knowledge of programs in order to be an educational leader, and who has a desire to be an administrator because of commitment to students and teachers.

SCHOOL DISTRICT C

This school district has approximately 4200 teachers and a pupil count of approximately 67 200. Out of 125 elementary schools, 43 have assistant principals. The general guideline for adding an assistant principal is when a school has 300 or more students. No elementary school in this district has more than one assistant principal. Administrative time is granted to the school generally on the basis of number of classrooms. For example, three to five classrooms would get one-half day per week; six to seven classrooms --- one day per week; eight to nine classrooms --- one and one-half day per week; ten to thirteen classrooms --- two days per week; fourteen to sixteen classrooms --- three days per week; seventeen to nineteen classrooms --- four days per week; twenty to thirty classrooms --- five and one-half days per week; and thirty-one and over classrooms --- six days per week. The principal, usually in consultation with the staff regarding priorities, determines the amount of administrative time allotted to the assistant principal. The assistant

principal receives an administrative allowance equivalent to 50% of the principal's administrative allowance.

Selection

There is a written policy for the appointment procedures for positions of leadership. Interested employees may attend a career opportunities information session held early in the school year prior to a call for general applications. The information includes types of positions, qualifications required, job expectations, and procedures for appointments. Interested candidates submit a general application at the beginning of each school year. A written note to Personnel Services re-activates applications from the previous year. Each candidate must have a minimum of: a teaching certificate; an undergraduate degree from a university; three years of successful experience as an educator; a current written evaluation; and assessment on leadership experience, evaluations, and references. "The procedures for the assessment of candidates is determined by the supervisor (principal) having the vacancy," or, as is usually the case, the principal requests "the assistance of support services to review candidate information, screen outside references and set up further screening procedures."

" Leadership experience is assessed by a member of Personnel Services, on the basis of the candidate's application and resume. Credit is given for demonstrated

leadership in school, district, community, and professional groups."

Each district has a committee for screening, interviewing, and short listing candidates for school administration, consisting of four members, one selected from each of the following groups: teachers, school administrators, parents, and central services administrators. "Committee members independently complete their ratings of candidates interviewed." The committee is chaired by a member of the personnel department, who does not rate the candidate. Generally, all assistant principal applications go through personnel services, who short list, then send all the information to the area associate superintendents, who make recommendations to the superintendent and the board of trustees. They may refer their choice to the principal for concurrence.

In specifying the qualifications for principals and assistant principals, the board states that they recognize:

> ... the primary function of principals and assistant principals is educational leadership. Candidates considered for these positions shall demonstrate a readiness for: curricular and instructional leadership; developing and maintaining positive relationships and attitudes; developing, implementing and evaluating concepts and programs; developing, assigning and evaluating staff; and planning and organizing human and physical resources to provide optimal learning environments for students.

Training

There is no formal training program. Training is on the job, through the principal. Assistant principals may call central services for advice if they need it. There is no formal statement of the assistant principalship being a training ground although it can be used that way. Assistant principals who are considering their position as a training ground are encouraged to talk to their principals about getting experience in all aspects of the principalship.

Orientation sessions may be set up at the request of associate superintendents or principals, or may be done by associate superintendents. Some are using a buddy system for people who are new to the assistant principalship.

Evaluation

The assistant principalship is an acting position for the first year. There is an evaluation done by the principal. The assessment is passed on to the area associate superintendent who makes recommendation to the board of trustees for confirmation of designation. Upon the approval of the board, the position is then considered to be ongoing.

Duties

There is no general policy statement for the duties and responsibilities of the assistant principal: it is considered

to be the same as that specified for the principal. The duties are as assigned by the principal, usually in consultation with the assistant principal.

General Comments

The principal has a great deal of autonomy in the running of the school, in consultation with staff, parents, and students. The budget is school based, and diversity to meet the needs of the students in that school is encouraged. In this school district, the assistant principal role as a training ground is apparently changing somewhat. There are fewer assistant principal positions in elementary schools generally because although there are more schools now, they are smaller. There is reduced mobility for assistant principals through to principalships. Consultants, department heads, and central office supervisors may be appointed to principalships without previous experience as assistant principals.

Assistant Principal 5-C

Assistant Principal 5-C has taught for eighteen years and is now completing her first year as an elementary school assistant principal. She has a Bachelor of Science degree, a Professional Diploma After Degree, and two full and three half-courses in Educational Administration.

This school has 450 students and eighteen classrooms for kindergarten to grade six. There are twenty-five teachers, many of whom are part-time. Included in the twenty-five staff are a librarian who has 70% time, and a resource room teacher who has 70% time. There is no counsellor.

The assistant principal is assigned 30% administrative time and 70% teaching time. She teaches a grade four homeroom class language arts, math, science, health, and art, as well as grade two science.

The principal has 100% administrative time.

The assistant principal and the principal sat down in the fall to work out a division of duties and responsibilities. The duties were written out along with the principal's expectations and criteria for evaluating them. The assistant principal's duties are: to act as principal in his absence; to develop, implement and monitor the teacher supervision of students, a parent volunteer program, and a student safety patrol program; to provide leadership, advice, and assistance in the school's mathematics and gifted programs; to assist in the selection, assignment, training, performance, professional growth and advancements, evaluation, and retention, transfer, promotion, reprimand, and demotion and separation of all staff; to manage the parent-teacher conference program; to order, schedule, and return results of testing; to coordinate concerts and special events in the gym; and to share in discipline and the writing of newsletters.

The Principal of 5-C

The principal of 5-C was made an assistant principal in his second year of teaching in a junior high school. Then he was the assistant principal of an elementary/junior high school for three years. Following that he was the principal of an elementary school for several years. For the last seventeen years, he has been in central office. This is his first year back in the schools as a school administrator.

He enjoyed some of the extra duties associated with his assistant principalships and did not enjoy others, namely the strapping he was responsible for as part of his job as disciplinarian. In the first situation, he had more "go-for" jobs, the jobs that nobody else wanted. In the second case he got more meaningful jobs and found he really enjoyed the experience.

He sees major changes in the role today from when he was an assistant principal. He feels that there has been a maturing of administration in specifying goals and expectations, and in giving responsibility to assistant principals. He feels that her role today will prepare her for a principalship more than his assistant principal role because he was basically given second class jobs. The job is much more comprehensive now. He sees his assistant principal as a partner. As partners of a team, the principal and the

assistant principal must know one another well, be able to predict thoughts, concerns, and behavior, as well as have a confidence in one another. He feels that although the assistant principal has the problem of "riding the fence" between staff and administration, they cannot afford to sit on the fence as much as they used to. They must work as part of a cohesive team to run the school as effectively as possible.

The principal of 5-C feels that the role of the assistant principal is basically essential if the school is large and/or has multiple programs. But he feels that in smaller schools with limited budgets, one administrator is possible. In the event that there is no assistant principal, he suggests that there may be other ways to get help. Especially if handicapped students and other special programs are integrated into the schools, one person, such as the assistant principal cannot have all the skills and expertise needed, so there may have to be multi-teacher leader roles. These teachers, with specific kinds of expertise, would be recognized and would be paid through time off to do the work of helping other teachers work more effectively.

However, he feels that a good assistant principalship experience is one of the best ways to become prepared for a principalship, and principals must be recruited from somewhere. He noted that in a school based budget situation, if the principal does not give the assistant principal

meaningful work, the staff will want to know why they are there, since staff are aware that assistant principals cost more than teachers. He sees it as part of his role to train and develop assistant principals for future principalships.

In selecting an assistant principal he would look for someone who is strong in helping children do as well as they can; who has a genuine interest and ability to help teachers do as well as they can; who has an ability to work with parents; who is a self-starter and shows a lot of initiative; who is creative and is willing to take risks; who is honest; who has a strong background in educational training; and who is familiar with what should be taught, as well as government and district plans for monitoring and communicating results.

Assistant Principal 6-C

Assistant Principal 6-C has taught for nineteen years, four of which he has been an assistant principal at this school. He has a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Master of Education degree in Educational Administration.

This school has 225 students in kindergarten to grade six and special education programs including a Trainable Mentally Handicapped Program and a Behavior Disorder Program. There are 23 certified staff including a counsellor who has 30% time, a speech therapist who has 60% time, a language arts resource teacher who has 60% time, the principal, and

the assistant principal. There are ten teacher aides: eight work with the special education programs, one works in the library, and one does secretarial work.

The assistant principal has 30% administrative time and teaches 70% of the time in a grade five homeroom class teaching math, language arts, art, and physical education.

The principal has 100% administration time.

The first year the principal wrote out the things that he wanted the assistant principal to do. The assistant principal's duties are still much the same, however, he sets his own directions to do what he sees that needs to be done. The areas that he is responsible for include: acting as principal in his absence; being in charge of teacher supervision of students; taking care of the houseleague program; being on the budget committee; responding to special problems; and working on special themes and programs for the school. The principal and the assistant principal both handle discipline problems depending on who is available.

The Principal of 6-C

The principal of 6-C was never an assistant principal. After teaching for several years, he went back to university for a Master of Education degree in Reading. He then worked in central office as a supervisor for seven years. He was appointed principal of this school seven years ago.

Although he thinks it might be advisable to be an assistant principal first, he feels that it is not the only route to a principalship. In his years as a supervisor he worked closely with principals, parents, teachers, senior administrators, government officials, and the board of trustees, so from that point of view he felt he was prepared for the principalship. The details of running the school, such as scheduling and procedures, he felt he was not fully prepared for. However, when he came to this school, the assistant principal, who had been on the job for two years, helped a great deal. He feels that given comparable training or experience in some other way, the gap can be bridged and other positions besides the assistant principalship can lead to a principalship.

This principal considers it as part of his role to train the assistant principal for promotion. He always consults with the assistant principal on a confidential basis. He feels that it is good training for the assistant principal to be an active part of everything that goes on in the school, at least in a consultative, advisory manner.

He feels that having an assistant principal is of direct benefit to him for having someone to test out his ideas on, to confide in, to advise him, and to share the administrative duties. Since he has a different relationship with the staff than the principal does, the assistant principal can offer valuable advice; and since he has assigned administrative

duties, he can take some of the pressure off the principal.

This principal felt that if a school was small, with about 200 students, had a small staff, and a straight kindergarten to grade six program, an assistant principal might not be necessary. However, it would depend on the circumstances and the variety of programs offered in the school whether or not there should be an assistant principal.

He hopes that the assistant principal role is maintained because of what they can contribute and what they can learn. Good administrators are needed in the schools and the assistant principal is a positive route to assuring that. He suggests that perhaps an apprenticeship program for principals and assistant principals would be a good idea. Also, perhaps assistant principals could be given a half day here and there to work with other principals who were identified as being particularly capable in various areas. A broader experience, being an assistant principal in a couple of schools before becoming a principal, might be valuable in the training of administrators.

The characteristics that this principal would look for in selecting an assistant principal are: someone who is child oriented, who likes, understands, and puts out for children; someone who has a feel for curriculum, who has expertise in order to take on a leadership role in the school, to help organize materials and to counsel teachers; someone who is a public relations person, who can deal with

people, being rational, reasonable, and flexible, who will listen and bend when necessary; and someone the principal can get along with.

CHAPTER 5

THE PERSPECTIVES OF SIX ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

The purpose of this chapter is to present the perspectives of six elementary school assistant principals. The expression of their thoughts and experiences allows a view of their world as assistant principals which may promote greater understanding, insight, and perhaps discovery of implications for further study, thinking, and policies relating to school administration.

The perspectives are presented through major themes which emerged from the analysis of the interview data. Within each of these major themes are related categories. The assistant principals' views of their role are presented through direct quotation of what they said in the in-depth interviews. Generally, the quotations are indicative of support for the theme. However, in order to present a complete and accurate portrayal of the findings of the study, exceptions to the essence of the theme are also noted and appropriate quotations are provided.

The quotations are single spaced and a change of speaker is indicated by additional space. The researcher's comments for clarification and extension are set in parentheses. Quotations have been edited to the extent that irrelevant pauses, um, uhs, and insignificant aside comments have been

omitted, always with an awareness of preserving the intent of the quotation. The researcher has omitted details or has substituted general terms for names or places which may identify the subjects. The pronoun he will be used throughout in the researcher's comments, except where the gender of the subject is significant to the understanding of the quotation.

I. VISION FOR IMPROVEMENT

In describing why they applied for the position, how they got the position, and how they felt when they got the position, the assistant principals generally spoke in terms of visualizing improvements in education. They saw themselves as leaders with the potential to affect change toward better education. They saw themselves as able to make an impact in a broader way than classroom teaching.

> I really feel that I have a focus, a vision of what schools should be and I guess I have probably waited for ten years because I've been sort of putting it all together.

Why They Applied

Some assistant principals felt that, as classroom teachers, they were not able to make the changes or do the kinds of things they thought should be done. They wanted the authority for decision making that administration could give them:

> I applied for it (the position). I wanted it. There are a lot of things you see when you are a teacher that you think, gee, I wish I was in authority, that I could change it, or I would like to try this idea that I have and I can't do it as a teacher; I would have to be an administrator. And I like to organize things, and try new things and so on. There's a lot of chance to do that when you are an administrator that you don't have in the classroom.

> I felt that when I applied for this job that one of the main reasons I was applying was that as a teacher in the school I was doing a lot of these things (supervisory) anyway, but there came a point where I didn't have any authority, so I couldn't do a lot of the things that I wanted to do. And I was extremely frustrated by what I saw happening in the schools and I thought to myself, there's only one way to do something about that, and so that's really the main thrust for me applying.

One person, who wanted to become a decision maker, attributed his experience as a coordinator as valuable for building confidence in his ability to make good decisions:

> I got somewhat tired of having decisions made for me. There were some things that I felt strongly enough about that I felt the only way that I could help bring about changes was by being a decision maker or someone who could move decisions to my way of thinking in some manner. So I did. I think what may have set me on the track too, was that I was a Language Arts coordinator for several years and there is a fair bit of decision making involved in that. While I was doing that it really helped build up my confidence and a lot of the decisions that I was making were good decisions, I mean, in looking back at it now, and also, then, making a decision and then

> sitting back and watching things fall into place, and fall into place well. Made me feel, well maybe I should give something else a try.

Being a facilitator, seeing how different schools operated, stimulated this person to utilize their talents in administration:

> ... previously, in addition to teaching in the classroom, before I was vice principal --- I was what is known as a reading facilitator. I worked in twenty-two different teachers' classrooms in the area of grade five reading and travelled to five different schools. I became a little fascinated with how each school was operated. I also saw some things that I really liked and thought that other schools could benefit from. I saw some things that I didn't like and I thought I could change; and in my own classroom there were times that I was frustrated and I didn't have the money or the... I wanted to do things in my classroom and other teachers wanted to do things in their classroom and the priority of the school was different, and I thought, well if I was in administration maybe I could help them accomplish some of the things that they want to do. I thought that I had something to offer and thought that maybe some of my talents would be used better in an administrative role than in the classroom --- solely in the classroom.

> I suppose I felt that I had... that maybe I could get things to go more in the direction that you wanted things to go as a teacher, and that as an assistant principal you would have a greater impact on the direction that the school would take, that the educating of the children would take, the direction your staff would take, having good morale and that sort of thing on the staff, with the teachers happy, the kids happy and enjoying school and wanting to come to school, finding school an

interesting and a fun place to be, an enjoyable place to be.

One person felt he could do a better job than some people he observed:

> And I didn't tell you that one of the other reasons that I wanted to become a vice principal was because I did see people that I thought I could do a better job than. And it is unfortunate that people strive for something and can't realize when they reach their limit, and please God, help me realize that if I reach a position that I'm no good at, that I will get out of it, and not keep it because I want to stay in it, or keep it because the social status is there or something like that...

How They Felt When They Got The Job

Most of them wanted an assistant principalship, wanted the authority to do what they envisioned, and were elated at getting the position. Some of them indicated that they felt very ready for the position and would have been disappointed had they not gotten it:

> I was elated. My own personal feeling is that you don't apply for something that you don't really want. I know that talking to other colleagues that they say to me, "I applied for a principalship, but I don't think I'll get it, but I just wanted to let them know I was interested in that type of work." I have teachers tell me that, "I applied for a vice principalship but it is just the first time, so I don't think I'll get it." But I don't believe in that. I would have been rather... I wouldn't have been hurt, but I would have wanted to know why I wasn't selected had I not been. I would have wanted to go back and find out which areas I scored poorly in so that I

could have improved on those.

> Really good, super, it was a real boost. It was a real moral boost. You kind of felt like, well, okay, somebody's finally recognized me for the qualities you obviously felt you had or you wouldn't bother to apply in the first place. It was a terrific feeling. It was an emotional high.

> I was happy. I would have been very disappointed had they not (appointed me assistant principal). The parents of the district sent in a letter to the superintendent requesting that I be appointed when the assistant principal left. I am sure that had something to do with me getting it.

> I was quite happy. To tell you the honest truth, I had applied the year before and didn't get it. I was really quite disappointed because I'm the kind of person who doesn't apply for something unless I'm really ready for it. I don't take a lot of risks and I was quite disappointed the first time around when I didn't get it.

One person indicated a series of emotions:

> The first feeling was one of shock, followed by exhilaration, because, I'd done it! I mean it's a real high. Then of course, once I'd calmed down I started to worry (related to school programs and large school size)... that created some apprehensions at first.

One assistant principal, who had been talked into applying for administration, felt quite differently from the others upon receiving the appointment:

> I had a lot of trepidation; I figured, can I do it? You know, this isn't me. I thought I'd like just to be a teacher, and the responsibility, and you've got to do this, and that. For the first while there... we worked all summer, and I figured, if this is what administration is --- I don't want that. I mean I enjoy teaching, I really like it, but I also need my time to do my outside interests.

This person had these types of doubts the first year, but has "never regretted" accepting the position since.

Types of Visions

The types of visions for better education were varied and numerous. The person who was quoted earlier as "having a vision of what schools should be," elaborated on the types of improvements envisioned:

> I'm really interested in this whole idea of teaching teachers to teach because it's something that I've really felt strongly about for a long time. My big goal is getting into effective teaching and management, that whole area; I'm really quite excited about it, have done a lot of reading about it. I'm going to spend some time this summer in California, Los Angeles, taking some courses with Madeline Hunter, which is a real thrill.
> Another area, in terms of taking this position, that really made me want to get into it, was working, identifying... I've done a lot of work with student teachers, and so that was something I had such success with --- working with student teachers, that I thought it would be really neat to be in a position where instead of grooming just a class, what you are really doing is grooming a group of your peers. I really think that a lot can be done. I found that out with student teaching. I'm thinking in terms of program development, and I'm thinking in terms of making the school

> effective all the way from the bottom to the top, not just in one classroom. Setting some sort of standards, school wide; setting some sort of discipline, school wide; setting some sort of management strategies, school wide; doing a lot of professional development with the staff, not just well, yeah, I think we might have a meeting this week; I don't believe in it. To me, I really feel I have a focus, a vision of what schools should be and I guess that I have probably waited for ten years because I've been sort of putting it all together. I realize that there are a lot of really good schools out there and good teachers out there but they are not always matched. We really have a lot of work to do in that area. I don't think it's all that difficult to get to, especially in our system, because in (our system) already, the teachers basically are good, the schools are relatively small and well run. When I say well run, I mean that they have the basics. I don't know how effective they are. That's where I really feel strongly that we have to pull ourselves together and do something. That's why I'm really excited by Madeline Hunter, because I think she's got strategies where you can say to a person, "Try this, not only will it change your day, but it will change your year!" To me a school and a staff is like a classroom. You take them and you say, "Look this is where we're going this year," and granted not everybody wants to go that way, but there are other schools for those kinds of people. I'd like a school to be more than just a building; it's got to have a focus. I don't know, I probably have a lot of ideals, but I really think they can be reached --- slowly, you know, I'm not into revolution.

One assistant principal felt strongly about increasing parent involvement in schools and visualized cross grading in language arts:

> One thing I feel very strongly about is volunteer --- getting parents involved in education. I think that's probably one place where our educational system has really fallen

> down, that parents for many years have felt excluded from the schools. They felt like trespassers almost, when they came into the schools. I feel that every parent should be involved with doing something with the school, in the school, because I think a lot of the criticism of education is they don't know what's going on in the schools. And I find that the more parents know what's going on in schools, the less they criticize, because they understand... I know it's hard because parents are working and they don't have the time but... the ones that do come are such a wonderful help. They can sit down with one student who is having a problem... uninterrupted... wonderful what they can do. One (more) thing that I would like to do, is cross grading so that the children would move from their homeroom to some other room that is at their level of language arts... with the trend to larger classes that we have right now, we need to have less of a spread... can't give them an individual program, it's impossible, so therefore, the next best thing would be not to have (that spread in my classroom), so you would have every room doing language arts at the same time and the children would be in whatever level they needed to be at. But that would be a dream for the future, and who knows, but I would like to do it though.

A school wide discipline policy was envisioned to improve the climate of the school:

> A school wide discipline policy --- when I was a Reading Facilitator, I was privileged to go into five schools. Every school you go in has a climate. Maybe as a teacher you were more aware of it than a lay person, but I think you can tell by walking in the door of a school and spending five minutes there, what kind of a place it is, whether there is a set policy or whether it is a catch as catch can discipline, whether the entire staff knows this is the way we deal with things... a policy or statement on discipline that is followed through...

Increased staff participation in establishing priorities for budgeting was another goal:

> Establishing priorities, changing the system of budgeting. In some schools it is all done very democratically... that's the sort of thing I would like to change, get a little more input from the staff.

One assistant principal's visions for better education included a positive relationship with the staff, students, and the community:

> My goals as an assistant principal or as an administrator... if I was to achieve something that would really make me feel good as a person, as a human being, would be to have a staff that respected you and looked up to you, but most of all, where their morale is high, where you could look at your staff and think, now these people are happy, contented, feel like we are going in the right direction, they are motivated... the other thing would be to have kids look at you as an individual that they respect, that they admire, look up to, that they consider as a friend and as a good teacher... and the respect of the community, the people out there, parents who feel welcome in the school, free to come and discuss, whether they have a problem or if they don't have a problem; they feel that the school is a good place to come, that it is a good place for their kids... those are the three things as a teacher, human being, and an administrator, would really make you feel good.

Although he realizes that not all of his dreams can be achieved, this person would not want the job if he did not think that at least some of his ideas could be implemented:

> I'm sure I'll have to make lots of compromises, because the decisions that you

> make don't just affect yourself. They affect a number of teachers, students, parents, and so on, so therefore you never get everybody agreeing with what you yourself want to do so you obviously have to make compromises. But I hope I will be able to make some (of the changes visualized). The fact that we have as many parent volunteers as we have, I feel, is because of my influence. If I didn't feel I could put into effect a number of my ideas, I wouldn't want this job.

Visions That Have Been Realized

Some assistant principals indicated the implementation of their ideas for programs that they had envisioned. A school wide discipline policy was initiated by two assistant principals:

> We have a discipline policy; that was something that I initiated, and got (the principal's) support on, that we both worked on, and worked with our consultant through the teacher effectiveness program, set up a number of inservice days where we had (the consultant) come either for a professional development day or come after school. One of the things that we wanted to do was develop a consistent discipline program throughout the school... it's quite a detailed policy... as long as the consistency is there, it works... hasn't been communicated well enough to the parents... the idea was to not lose children's respect when you do have to discipline, that they view it as being something fair, something consistent...

> I approached --- (the principal) and said, "Look, can we start working on some sort of discipline program, where we start looking at what people are doing and how they like to work on discipline in their classrooms?"... It was a very punitive system, putting names down in a book... I had been doing this thing, more

along the line of Barbara Coloroso, the responsibility for actions, consequences, and this sort of thing, so I thought it was time to make others aware in the school... so we did a big program on discipline and professional development for about four weeks, then we did some work on teacher effectiveness... people from outside, videotapes, went to see Barbara Coloroso.

One person initiated a gifted enrichment program:

This year we set up that gifted enrichment program... it was my idea, and I don't think anybody would dispute that, but (principal) has to be given a great deal of credit (in instituting it)... but in the sense of the educational leadership, the idea was mine, and developing the idea to a certain extent, and then it was taken from there, but I see that as the role of an educational leader. You are not trying to do everything for somebody; you are trying to develop the ideas, to develop the leadership, to develop the guidance, and then to be able to delegate or whatever is necessary and let people take over. You can't do it all; you can't teach the whole school; you can't run it all. You have to have a staff to do that. But I don't feel that I do enough of that sort of thing.

Another initiated a library improvement project:

The library project, I put in, asking for money to develop our library, to make it a more human space...

One assistant principal indicated that implementing programs requires continual work and building:

I've become a bit disillusioned at times. To a certain extent I would say I have realized some of my dreams. It's one where you're continually trying to build or develop staff. We had a big push on here a few years ago to

> develop a positive self concept in the students, so that they viewed themselves in a positive manner, and the school as well. We worked towards that; everyone worked hard at that... you can see progress in measurable ways; the kids are happier at school, on the playground; they are happier at home. But there is always a turnover in staff. You work hard to develop something, then you get a turnover, because of declining enrolments, or staff transfer. You feel that for some reason or another you build a program and it gets eaten away. You lose key people and then new people come in who haven't had that background... It's a continual building process. You just get something built and then something happens to it.

II. THINGS CHANGE WHEN YOU BECOME AN ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

The assistant principals all indicated that there were a number of changes that took place once they moved from being a classroom teacher to being an assistant principal. Some remembered initial feelings of insecurity, uncertainty, and loneliness. Some found that there was a change in status, with the kinds of information they were privy to, with their relationships with the teachers and with the principal, and in some cases, with the students. Some found that they experienced a change in focus from just their classroom to the administration of the entire school, which affected their teaching.

First Feelings

The first few months of an assistant principalship were

often difficult and unhappy ones for a number of people:

> For the first few months I was not very happy. I was quite unhappy, and sort of lonely, and I really was angry because I felt that I'd been put in this position and nobody was giving me any help. I have to think about this now, because it's forgotten almost, it's gone down that low. But I can remember going into that lunchroom, and I'd never done a lot of lunchroom supervision, and I thought to myself, this is just crazy; no one even tells you what has been done in the past. They just open the door and push you in, sort of thing. I don't know what rules and regulations they have... silly little management things but they make or break you because if one person does it one way and you do it another way, the kids soon learn who's the authority and who isn't. I really had some difficulty with that issue, because I was an authority now and I didn't know what to do! That disappointed me because there was no in-school training to speak of at first, it was do or die.... I didn't know where to find the answers... The first few months really were not very pleasant now that I think back.

> The elation was at getting the job, immediately after that... they changed more to, now that I've got this position, now what do I do?... sat down with the principal and hammered out a job description based on what he saw were the needs of the school, and me sitting there nodding and smiling and thinking: I wished I would have asked all those people who were vice principals where I'd been just what they did so I'd have an idea what I should be doing. Maybe I'm taking on too much, maybe I'm not doing enough, doubts kind of crept in.

In a situation where the principal and the assistant principal were both new to their positions in that school, difficulties were experienced initially:

> The first two or three months were pretty rough for both of us, but things have settled down very nicely.

Feelings of being alone, not knowing what to do, and being hesitant to ask, were reported:

> The first year that I was in the job I didn't feel particularly good about it because I felt that I hadn't really done that much. I mean, I was shuffling a lot of paper, and I had admin. time and I was going into classes and things like that, but I really hadn't been instrumental in bringing about the kinds of changes that gives one a sense of self-satisfaction. I found that people weren't coming to me as much to start off with. I suppose they were feeling me out as well. And so it was almost like--- from being a member of a staff, all of a sudden here I was, an island. And that was kind of scary because all of a sudden, you've got no one to talk to. You really can't go to a teacher and say, "This really worries me, what do you think I should do?", which I could do when I was just a regular teacher. And I really didn't know my two counterparts well enough to go to them and say, "Well, what should I do, I am not quite sure?" I think too, that I was really afraid that someone might think that I couldn't do it. And that might have been one of the reasons as well why I wouldn't go. I'd try and sort it out on my own. I know now, that's probably the worst way to go about it. If something bothers you or you're not quite sure, you go and ask. But it was my first year, it was a probationary year, and it was kind of scary.

Not having his duties specified created uncomfortable feelings:

> I told you the first year I was kind of stilted in my manner, and was not very comfortable because I wasn't sure, it wasn't clarified for me what my duties were... all

> kind of vague, nothing that was set out... now that we have worked out our jobs more specifically, it's easier for us and easier for the staff because now they know who to go to for various things.

One person, who wanted a life outside his career, initially felt that being an administrator was going to interfere with the other things he wanted to do:

> I vowed years ago that teaching was important to me and it's my job, but all my friends are not going to be teachers. I want to go out and meet other people and go out and get involved in other things that are not teaching oriented... So I felt when I got that job (first assistant principalship), and the administration of setting the school up and the first year, getting policy handbooks, getting the school organized the way you want--- it almost wiped me out. And I said, "This isn't for me; that's too much time to do what has to be done as an administrator; I'm just going to go back and teach." I found out and realized from talking with some people, that okay, the first year is going to be like that, and I've never regretted it since. I think I would have a hard time, not that I couldn't cope with it, going back being a full-time teacher. I like the teaching I'm doing, but I also like the administration because you can see what's going on and there's something new all the time. No, I don't regret it... I'm fairly content.

Teaching Changed

Many assistant principals expressed concern that their quality of teaching has declined somewhat since they became administrators. Although they feel that they are still good teachers, they feel that due to a shortage of time, dual

duties, and a shift of focus, they are not the excellent teachers they were when they were classroom teachers. However, where more time was granted, one person experienced an improvement in his teaching.

> I felt that when I was a teacher, I spent a lot more time, and it is no excuse really... but I find that my mind is more on administrative tasks, and things that are going on... that I feel that the teaching of my science and my math have gone down, the preparation and the work that I used to put into it. I still feel I do a reasonably good job; I put time into it. But in the old days when I was just a teacher, I spent a lot of time looking at different things, and trying different methods... not so much anymore. This is my twenty-second year of teaching and my mind is more on administrative stuff than it is on teaching. I kick myself somedays about that and I sit down and I rewrite whole new ideas. But sometimes after dealing with kids' discipline problems, or something has happened, by the time I get to class, my mind is just, whew... I would say in my case, my teaching has gone down, the amount of work that I put into it; I still put the work into it, but the enthusiasm has gone down.

> ...which is another difficult area (mainly teaching, little administrative time) because I came into this with a larger focus. In the past my class has been my really big focus, and that means a great deal to me, because I am that kind of a teacher. But this year I came into it with not only my class, but this school and all these teachers. And it's really been a strain in some ways because I have had to figure out how much time I can relegate. And I wanted to have a larger focus than just my classroom because otherwise, nobody's even going to know who you are. And yet, it's a tradeoff, because I felt I lost a little of my class, although over the months I realize it's not really lost. But you can't do all these other things (reorganize areas

and organize programs) and keep such close touch with your class. Plus the fact that I wasn't in my class 20% of the time, so the person who went in... I'd never shared a class before, so that was another new experience, because we are different teachers.
I am very curriculum oriented, very program oriented. It's really important to me to teach well all the time. So that was really difficult for me because I was afraid that I was going to lose something in the teaching end and I didn't want to do that.

At times there are different days or weeks that I find I am up to here with everything and I find that if anything gets pushed back a little bit, it's my class time, preparation, organization, and that frustrates me, but usually it's balanced off very well.

Right now I find that I have a conflict in that if I do a good job in my classroom--- at one time I considered myself a master teacher, or approaching that level, a very good teacher. Now I would consider myself to be a mediocre to average teacher, in terms of what happens in my classroom, how well organized I am, how well planned and developed my lessons are. I can't seem to hit a happy medium. If I spend a lot of time in my room or a lot of time after school or at noon hour or before school, preparing lessons, planning, being ready to teach, my administrative duties start to slide. I feel like somehow or other I'm out of touch, or I've lost control, or things aren't going as smoothly as they could. And then you bounce back in the other direction, and if you spend too much time doing administrative sort of things, then you find that your classroom starts to suffer again. By and large, I would say I spend an awful lot of time outside of my assigned administrative time, doing administrative kinds of things, before school in the morning... maybe just reading paper, it's just a paper blizzard! It's getting to the point where you feel swamped, you can't stay on top of it all.

When asked if there was any solution to the conflict, this person said:

> Yes, give assistant principals more administrative time.

Another person also indicated that a shortage of time for administrative tasks was reducing his teaching quality:

> I don't have enough time. I have had a terrible feeling all year that I'm not quite as good a teacher as I usually am because I have been spending too much time in the office doing administrative jobs and I haven't, when I should have, been staying after school helping children with problems or marking; I have in fact been doing administrative work; so that's been nagging at me all year long.

One person felt that due to the heavy preparation required for teaching core subjects, assistant principals should possibly consider teaching the extra subjects:

> In some good ways, in some bad ways (being an assistant principal has affected their teaching). There are times, because I'm dealing with a certain problem, that I should be in the classroom and when the class sits and does seatwork when I should be instructing. From that point of view it hasn't helped things. I made a vow at the beginning when I started in administration that, I always saw these principals teaching the "fluff," teaching somebody's phys. ed. in grade three, somebody else's phys. ed. in grade six, art in grade four... I would like to teach some meat and potatoes, reading, math, core subjects, which take more work in preparation. I sort of strangle myself on both ends, doing preparation for core subjects and administration. My thinking has changed. Maybe at the next school--- well, I'm not going to insist that I teach reading or math, like I did this year.

However, one assistant principal attributed an improvement in teaching to the allocation of sufficient time:

> Having to teach only one subject and being given extra time, I was able to research the subject and work on improving the teaching of that subject. The language arts had been taught in the traditional skills teaching method, which was the way I used to teach it as well. With increased emphasis on an integrated approach, I had to look into it, and apply it to my teaching. I had to convince myself. The extra attention to the justification for using an integrated approach and the knowledge of the methodology has made me a better teacher, and I have, I think, been able to help others become better teachers.

The assignment of a homeroom class was mentioned as causing a difficulty due to the requirement for flexibility and time to attend to administrative tasks:

> There are some hassles having a homeroom. If things come up and you need to be there, they (the class) really need to be a responsible group --- and that takes a lot of time... it (not having a homeroom) would take a lot of pressure off, report card pressure, deciding where grade sixes go next year in junior high, and all those kinds of things. Someone has to look after that group, but it would be nice if it was someone else. Now that may not be true of every vice principal, but my feeling is that I have a larger focus and I want to do more in the whole school. So I think that's probably why I'm feeling this way, because I don't spend all my time in my room. That's one of the problems I have found this year, is that I have no time for my class. All the work I do for them, I do at home. All my preparation, marking, and everything, I do at home, because I can't do it at school.

> I'm not a homeroom teacher, haven't been for years... I was (before). I found that very

> difficult; problems come up at nine o'clock, and this sort of thing, and timetabling, you had to be in the classroom when there was--- yeah, that was a difficult situation. I spent a lot of time after school in the evenings just trying to keep up. Being a homeroom teacher does have a lot of responsibilities, parent teacher interviews, trying to set those up with the administration, and you're involved, it was really something... if a school gets this size, the assistant principal should not have a homeroom; there's just too many things going on.

> There is a conflict if the principal is away, like he's away for two days right now, and if something comes up that they need an administrator, they have to come and get me. Occasionally I have to leave my class, or she (secretary) brings me a cheque to sign.

One assistant principal felt that being the homeroom teacher did not add to the pressures, but spoke primarily in terms of the physical set up. He did stress that a great deal of communication with the relieving teacher is necessary for the smooth running of a homeroom:

> No, I didn't have a homeroom the last two years. It really didn't matter... I did all my preparation in my office... no difference, not having a homeroom, not having another desk... There's an awful lot of communication to be done (with relieving teacher). Our styles have to be similar, if not similar, we have to agree on certain things... I didn't realize that the first year I was vice principal and we did have problems...

Two assistant principals indicated that they liked having a homeroom:

> It's kind of nice to have a homeroom but it can be difficult as well, but I think all in all, I quite like having a homeroom... there's a different teacher for every subject, so the kids really have, to start off with anyway, a tough time, coming from one or two teachers, all of a sudden, they've got seven, a hard adjustment.

> I have always had a homeroom and I always had a relieving teacher, I guess primarily because I was on three-tenths (administrative time). I don't know if it would really matter, somebody has to be responsible for those kids. It might take some of the pressure off, knowing you weren't the homeroom teacher... but if I'm teaching the preponderance of the courses, teaching that class eight-tenths of the time, I guess it makes sense to be their homeroom teacher.

Relationship With Students

There was some indication of a change in their relationship with students since becoming an administrator.

This assistant principal felt that he was not as close to his own class but that he knew more of the students in the school. Additionally, he felt that, as an authority figure, there is a separation, a line that was not there when he was strictly teaching:

> I feel it in my teaching too (a change) because I usually am very close to my class, much closer, and we're pretty close, but usually I'm a lot closer. And I think probably they are looking at me in a different light because I am an authority figure, and I think I probably am not giving as much as I usually give because I've been too busy trying to do a larger giving... I think there's always a tradeoff; this way there's some

> wonderful feelings in getting to know all the kids in the school. You get a perspective of all the kids in the school, you're walking around and they all know you. Where before, that wasn't the case. Your class knew you and loved you really a lot, and I'm not saying that that isn't the case, I think that there are a lot who do feel that we are really close, but there is that little line, that I can't really cross.

The title of administrator makes a difference with discipline:

> I think the title of whatever kind of administrator, really helps in terms of discipline; like I can be walking by a very noisy room, and I'll walk in, and right away, everything gets subdued; so I think the title does help, but I don't think it has really altered my style of teaching or handling the children at all.

This assistant principal was appointed in the same school where he had been teaching. He felt that since both the principal and assistant principal were new, by moving a classroom teacher within the school that he had been working in to the role of assistant principal, there was a provision for continuity. But he is not sure that the students view him as an assistant principal:

> I am not sure sometimes that the children look at me as an assistant principal. They look at me as a teacher, which is fine by me, I would rather have it that way. But if you really wanted your position to be recognized as something different... if you needed that public label to give you authority, it might be a disadvantage to you to stay in the same school... whereas if you come in brand new as an assistant principal, you'll be looked on

primarily as an assistant principal.

One assistant principal feels an extra responsibility to know and be known to the students:

> I feel that administrators should be exposed to the kids. If I'm not on supervision, I walk the halls after the buzzer and talk to the kids and it gets a little tiring saying, "Hi, hi, hi," as you walk down the hall but as an assistant principal, you have to be exposed to the kids. They have to know who you are and that you aren't an old--- you know a lot of the little kids, grade ones and twos, are scared when they are sent to the office, and that's wrong. I feel that if someone's sent to the office, they know they are going to be talked to and it's not a place where, as some little kids think, they are going to get the strap.

Relationship With Teachers

Several assistant principals have experienced a change in their relationship with the teachers in the school:

> ...becoming an administrator --- there is a big difference. This is the first year, I've been a little more aloof than I usually am. Usually I enjoy really getting involved with the staff, but you can't. You have to be a little more careful of that. You can't just sit around and talk about things after school like you used to, sit around criticizing the administration like I used to (laughter), that was something that changed a lot. I feel this year, I've been a little aloof for me, but I hope to work that out a little bit more. I don't feel unfriendly to anybody and I don't feel that I don't get along with anybody here, but I have been closer to staffs, but then again, I was a teacher and we were all the same.
> I don't know if there has to be (a separation) but I think probably there usually is. It

> just becomes that way because things come up between you and the principal, and you know more in a general way about everybody in the school, so you can't consider sitting down and chatting or maybe gossiping with someone because you are privy to all this information --- about kids, about teachers, about little situations that happen in the classrooms. So I feel, that, yeah, there is a little difference.

This person felt that he was the same person he always was, but felt that the teachers' attitudes toward him had changed:

> To start with, when I first started, I think it was the teachers that changed, not me, because to me, just because I was a vice principal didn't change the basic me. But they treated me a little differently once I became an administrator, and I didn't like it. I thought, okay fine, that's your problem in a sense, but after a while, they found that, as far as I'm concerned, I didn't change that much as a person. I was still me; I could still talk and have fun. I just had other things that I was responsible for and I always tried to go around it in such a way that they weren't being threatened or they didn't feel that now that I was ay, ay--- a vp, he's using his authority... but I just went on to be the way I was, at least I thought I was... but I had teachers tell me that they felt a little different to me once I became a vp. And I said, "I'm sorry about that, because as far as I'm concerned I haven't changed as a person or as a personality, I've just got a few more things on my job list that I have to do." Sometimes I would joke with them, and say, "Hey, remember, I'm one of your bosses," but that was in joking fun... I just carry on and be myself and they either accept me that way or they don't... I found that it was the teachers who thought I was going to be different, not that I felt that I was going to be that much different.

An assistant principal needs to be more diplomatic and subtle with the staff:

> In some respects, I feel as though I had more impact on the staff as a teacher than I do as an assistant principal, because you don't have some kind of a fine line to walk, as a teacher--- particularly if you are an outgoing member of the staff, which I was--- outspoken, but generally speaking I got along well with the staff. I was interested in language arts, and if I felt strongly about something, as a member of the staff, it was very easy to speak your mind, because you then just went back to the classroom and didn't worry about what other people thought or have other people to answer to. You could have a very profound impact on the staff in determining the direction the school might go and usually I found that I had the blessings of most of the people in the school, particularly the administrators. Most of the time I was looked upon as trying to get something going that the administration wanted to go. Maybe they were really exercising good leadership in either approaching me or supporting me in that they knew if they could get the staff members going, that is what they want, that's an administrator's job if you can do it that way. In that sense I felt that I had more of an impact on my particular school. As an assistant principal, you have to be diplomatic; you can't come right out and tell teachers that this is what you have to do. You have to, either by getting someone else on the staff that is using the particular approach or whatever, by encouraging that, and get that to grow and foster in the school; so it's sort of a diplomatic way of getting things moving. If you try and push it too hard, and the teachers are unwilling, or hesitant, or aren't really convinced--- it won't succeed, so you have got to be fairly tactful about how you do things or you will turn people off rather than turn them on. Whereas as a teacher, I found that if I felt that was the direction things should go I could be as outspoken as I wanted to be.

An assistant principal needs to relate to all of the staff:

> When you are just a teacher, you just work with basically the ones in your grade, coordinating, but as an assistant principal, you have to try and figure out all the personalities and figure out when they have had a bad day and go and try to cheer them up.

This person, who felt alone and left out at the beginning of his assistant principalship, now feels very good about his relationship with the teachers:

> I really like what I'm doing. I can't emphasize enough how much I do because I feel so good about so many things that are happening and how comfortable I am with the staff and how they can come to me with personal problems, academic problems, and discipline problems and not feel that they are going to an administrator. I think they realize that there is that step up or whatever, and therefore the respect is there, but they come to me with a great deal of ease, which didn't happen at first.

This assistant principal related his personal techniques for getting staff to work cohesively:

> I learn by sitting in the staff room. I watch, I get to know them. I see someone who needs a little more assurance, and I tell them that they are doing a good job. You give as much positive as you can to them all, but you've got to be there. When they have a problem that is important to them, you have to deal with it as soon as you can.

Several assistant principals talked about their role as a middle man.

One person wondered if it was only him, but felt that he sometimes is caught in the middle. He noted, however, that he can, in some cases be effective in solving problems through being a middle man. He also indicated that his primary loyalty is to the principal:

> Maybe it's my nature, and I don't know whether you have this with the other people or not, but the teachers come to me and express frustrations with what goes on in the next office; the principal comes to me and expresses frustration with what goes on in other classrooms; and so I'm caught in the middle. Maybe that's unique to me but possibly it goes with the job. Sometimes I'm powerless to do anything about it because you don't have final authority over what's going on. Even the principal, I guess, doesn't have final authority. But sometimes I'm caught in the middle and sometimes there's advantages to that because there's a situation where one side, the classroom teacher sees the particular problem a certain way and expresses it to me that way, and the principal sees it in a different light, and if I can work to get the two to see the other side's position, problems are sometimes solved that way. That's happened here, Christmas concerts... being privileged to both sides of it, I was able to solve the problem... But we present a united front; if there's anything we don't agree with, we talk about it; we decide on a course of action, and then regardless of each other's feelings on things, we mutually support each other.
>
> I know teachers come to me with their problems more than they did before, although they did come to me before, but they come to me more now. I suppose that the relationship has to change because the role has changed. Now I'm expected to help them solve their problems whereas before I wasn't, only if I felt like it. You know so many confidential things about the teachers when you are an assistant principal that you don't as a classroom teacher, just simply because they have to bring their problems to somebody. And of course there are times that you have to make

> decisions or make announcements that teachers don't welcome. I would hope that this summative evaluation thing is not pushed through because that will change the relationship very badly. It will destroy the collegial model because the minute you walk in the classroom, your presence is going to be suspect.

One person felt that he was a middle man temporarily while a new principal gained the confidence of the staff. He strongly feels that he does not care to be a middle man:

> This year we got a new principal, and he was a little suspect because he came from central office, and people weren't quite sure that they were prepared to trust him, so they would come to me... at the beginning of the year it was a fair amount, but as the year is going on he is gaining their trust; it's becoming less and less. I am relieved, because I don't want that as part of my job. I want people to come to either one of us. I don't want to hear anything about the principal that they're not prepared to state to the principal; so I would hope I never have that as part of my duties... I don't want that role, for me it would be wrong.

> As a liason person, what I have got to say is that that's the way its got to be done because that's the policy of the school or that's the way the principal would like it to be done. Or if what that person is saying makes alot of sense, I might say, you can go and talk to the principal about it or if you would like me to do it, I will see if he wants to make an exception in this case. You've got to know when to say no... you have got to be assertive. Can't be wishy washy... a positive assertiveness rather than a negative assertiveness.

Teachers' requests for confidentiality can pose a

problem for assistant principals in the middle man position:

> It isn't as intense (the problem of being a middle man) in this school as it was at the other school. And I don't mind, as long as the staff know that if they want it to be confidential, they let me know before they start. Also I say if it's a problem that I think the principal needs to know about, I tell them. They know I will talk to him about it and they can come back to me or go to him about what we decided. It is a tricky thing being that middle person, because you have got to watch you don't--- well, you hurt people's feelings sometimes whether you want to or not. Sometimes I will say, "If you are saying that, the principal has to know about it. There's no way I feel that can be kept." And if they make a big fuss, I say, "Fine, then we had better drop it right now, I don't want to hear about it unless you want to let (the principal) know about it also." I find that the hardest part, where to determine what should be passed on and what should not be. We are supposed to be working together on this. Their problems are important, but if it affects the whole school, then the principal should know.

One person reported that he is rarely put in the middle man position anymore:

> That has happened to me a bit in the past, where teachers have come to me and put me in a middle man sort of position, and that was a couple of years ago; I can only think of one incident. I am not in that position at all now.

Relationship With the Principal

After becoming an assistant principal, there is a change in the relationship with the principal. Several assistant principals indicated proudly that they felt that they were

partners with the principal, that they were treated professionally, and were given a great deal of freedom. Many described the constant sharing and communicating with the principal that they experience as assistant principals. Many referred to their relationship in terms of an administrative team, acknowledging that the principal always has the ultimate authority:

> I think we have moved a long way to working as a partnership and I expect next year, it will be more so, that we will be operating as a team. When I say operating as a team, I don't say that we have equal authority, because we don't and we never will, because the principal still is responsible for the school... he is the senior partner, I am the junior partner.

> The principal is a very easy going, sharing sort of person. He also treats you like a professional, so I can go ahead and do whatever I want. He hasn't got a pile of things laying on my desk every day, saying I want you to do this, this, and this. Now if he gets pressured, and doesn't have time to do something, he may ask me to deal with it, but by and large, he leaves me on my own to go ahead and set my own direction and do what I see fit. Now there are some things that I am responsible for... as the assistant principal I am privy to everything that the principal has in mind in terms of the direction the school wants to go and the monetary implications that that will have, and vice versa. We communicate those kinds of things; we have to. If I have ideas, he wants to hear them.

> I feel free to do just about anything I want in this school. I don't think that I would overstep the balance in terms of propriety... or do anything that would undermine his authority. But he is the kind of principal

> that I am pretty well free to direct myself... we have such a free and easy relationship that he doesn't worry about it and neither do I... The ultimate authority, the ultimate responsibility is his. If I get into trouble and do something wrong, if any assistant principal does something wrong, the buck stops at the principal. I might get my knuckles rapped, if something severe, I could even lose my job, but he's got the ultimate responsibility for it...

Many assistant principals referred to their relationship with the principal favorably in terms of the principal and assistant principal working together as a team:

> I am consulted on everything. I am not left out in the dark on anything, and if I am, it's my own fault; I haven't made myself available, or I simply haven't communicated, gone in and sat down in his office and said, "Okay, what's going on today?" We communicate all the time; our offices are right next door, and the first thing that I do when I come in in the morning, is walk in, sit down, and we will talk. Generally we talk most, especially if it is confidentialities, after school, when everyone has left. We don't like having our door shut.

> We have set times to meet together on the calendar but what we find is that we meet almost everyday. He and I have offices right next to each other so we are constantly... it's a little bit more difficult for the vice principal because his office is a ways away, so he's got to make the extra effort to come out, so with him, we have the formal kinds of things.

> The first year the principal was kind of feeling me out too... I was new at the job. I think he just wasn't sure how much responsibility should be dumped on my shoulders, so everything I did I cleared with

> him. But it's got to the point now that he has a lot of confidence in me, and anything that I do, I let him know, but I don't have to clear it with him first... it started to happen at the end of the first year.

One person attributed a school evaluation to improved relationships between administrators:

> Our school was evaluated by central office last year. I don't know if you've ever been through a school evaluation, it's the most horrendous thing, the most debilitating, morale breaking thing that one ever goes through, but out of all of that good things come. Because they come as outsiders, and they see things that you might not see or that you might have tried to change and have not been successful... they make recommendations... they recommended that the duties of the administrators were very vague, that they should be specified a lot more and that's when things started to be specified and started to fall into place... very clear now, works like clockwork, really good now... flexibility within boundaries, that's what one wants.

One assistant principal indicated that although the administrative style of the first principal taught him a lot, after being in the position several years, and at this stage of his life, he prefers the more relaxed administrative style of his present principal:

> It depends on the principal you are reporting to, some of them take complete charge of everything... others will give you a general job description and say go to it... I have only been with two principals... personally I prefer the way with (the second principal), he's much more relaxed. I feel I can take a little more initiative and carry on without always having to double check, double check,

> double check. But as a beginning administrator, the first principal's style really taught me a lot. There were reasons why all the time, lots of meetings. I don't particularly like long meetings, but (the first principal) made sure everybody knew what was going on, and why. As a beginning administrator, I learned a tremendous amount from her. If you started out with (the second principal's style), you might get a little frustrated at times, because you will ask him something at times and he will say, "Well, what do you think? Go ahead and try it." And if you're not the type of person who would say, "Okay, I'll take it by the horns," it could be frustrating. But I prefer (the second principal's) style now. But as a beginner, I'd like to suggest somebody who is very organized and lets you know why and when. So at this stage of my life now, I prefer the second principal's type.

He feels also, that their very positive relationship may be attributed to the right combination of personalities:

> When something comes up, he'll come in and we'll talk about it, and I either end up with it or he will do it; so I feel that it is a good type of thing. Some days I tell him, "Forget it, no more today, I am up to here with it, I am not going to be able to handle it until next week, so if it has to be done by this week..." He says, "Okay, I'll take a look at it and show it to you later." I find it a very good relationship... we work very well together... we haven't had one of those (arguments) in the years we have been working together. Maybe we have the right combination for each other.

Other Changes Related to the Position

The assistant principals mentioned a variety of other changes that they have experienced.

One assistant principal reported increased demands on his time as well as increased interruptions:

> My job has certainly changed at school. There are so many demands on my time. There are so many things to remember, I find it very difficult. I write a lot of notes to myself... You're not your own master anymore when you are an administrator. Your job is to facilitate teacher's jobs; as a result you're often doing little jobs for teachers, and you have to keep all those things separate in your mind as well as all your duties and responsibilities in your classroom. Unless you're terribly organized you wouldn't know where you're at. I've found that frustrating this year, to try and keep everything under control... The job of assistant principal forces you to have all these interruptions, and disruptions, so you can't be super organized, but you have to be, so you have to reconcile the two. I have always been the type of person who likes to finish something, and start something else and you can't do that in this role. That's been a very difficult adjustment for me. Home life, what is that? (laughter), no, I have very little home life, but I would say that is probably mostly because of A.T.A.

One person indicated that the role itself is dynamic:

> I see that my role is changing, different needs seem to crop up, and yes, I was in charge of language arts but really nothing much needed to be done, so it was stagnant. Then all of a sudden, we were going into a new series, and into this whole integration bit, and all of a sudden there was a lot of action, and there's a lot to do, and changes were happening, so all of a sudden it was getting very dynamic. So I think there are plateaus, peaks, and depressions too, I suppose.

One person has felt a strain in his personal life:

> I am spread way too thin. It definitely puts

> a strain on me in terms of how well I get along with my own kids and my wife. I vowed that if I felt that it was ever interfering to the extent that my marriage would break up, that I would resign my designation and go back to full-time classroom teaching and I think I still would. It hasn't interfered to that extent, either that or I'm very fortunate that I have a very understanding wife, because the staff will often comment that if I don't start going home I'll get a divorce.

A few people indicated a sense of isolation and a desire for increased opportunities for interaction with other administrators:

> I would like to know, do other assistant principals feel as pressured as I do or am the only one that's feeling that way? It could be that my situation is different in terms of the kinds of programs we're running... Do they feel that they could use more time so that they could do a better job of teaching and administrating...

> I'm looking forward to reading your study. I'm hoping to learn from it how other people view their job. You only learn from what you talk to other people about, unfortunately, I have found teachers to be secretive people... and I find it the same way with principals and assistant principals, that they come across a really good idea, there's not enough sharing goes into it, and we don't all grow because someone has a good idea.

One assistant principal, feeling the need for affiliation with other administrators, formed a group, like a club, consisting of administrators, many of whom are assistant principals. They meet once a month and talk about

professional matters and share ideas:

> We do get together once a month, in a group; all of us are women. A lot of them are assistants. It seems to be a role for a woman who wants to move up and they often move into assistant's role but they don't often move up to the next thing. So when we get together it's a very interesting discussion, and you should hear the ideas that they have. But there aren't a lot of positions open and a lot of them are held by men, who have had them for the last seventeen, eighteen, twenty years, who really aren't prepared to make a lot of different moves, so I'm really not sure what's going to happen, but my personal feeling is that we need to tap those resources; they shouldn't be sitting there wasted.
> It's very interesting... I more or less put it (the group) together... we meet once a month and we usually have dinner, and then anybody who wants to brings something to share, so they might bring an article or an idea that really worked in the school, or those kinds of things... most of them are assistant principals, five I guess, one is an area superintendent, and one is a library consultant, two are principals, all in supervisory positions... I sent letters to people I thought might be interested, that's how we started it up; they were all quite happy about it... It's very informal, but it's very useful... I'm sure you're aware of the old boys club that the men have (laughter) well this is a young girls club...

One person, who valued the opportunity for interaction with other administrators, would like to see a return to administrator meetings which include assistant principals:

> I learn more by talking to others... the ideas that they come up with... when they used to have administrator meetings, we found we learned more just by talking... they were called administration seminars, principals, assistant principals, and vice principals all went. We talked generally about administration in the county. We had little

> sheets with questions, "How would you handle..." It was one afternoon once a year, for two or three years, but we don't have them anymore. But going over those situations was good. Everybody got out their ideas... we would go into groups, talk about problem areas. The ideas that came out in those rap groups were really good. I enjoyed it.

III. A TRAINING GROUND

The assistant principalship is generally viewed as a training ground for a future principalship. The role is considered to be transitory, and the duties are performed and evaluated as experience and preparation for becoming a principal. Within this view is a dependency on the principal for on-the-job training. However, most assistant principals feel that they have a responsibility for ensuring their own success. Additionally, there appears to be ongoing self-evaluation of readiness for promotion and areas in need of further training and experience.

Training/Transitory

> Just as a point of philosophy, I think every vice principal looks at the job as a training ground to become a principal. Maybe as I get older, and I continue to realize that there is more to a principal than I first thought when I got into this a few years ago, and I realize that I'm not nearly as ready as I thought I was when I first became a vice principal, maybe I'll come to the conclusion that I have reached my potential, and that's where I'm

> going to end up, as a vice principal, and enjoy it, and do my best; but I personally believe that every vice principal, is, I know in my own case, learning the ropes, learning all of the things that have to be done to become a principal.

In response to the question of the assistant principalship leading to a principalship, many comments throughout the interviews indicated the affirmative:

> Oh, I think it's totally a training ground.

> Yes. Yes I do. I think that anyone who becomes an assistant principal does so with the viewpoint of learning the job (of principal).

> Yes, so far it is transitory. I look on it as a learning experience, trying so that I can eventually become a principal.

> I suppose I would be very disappointed (if I was not to become a principal). I am enjoying my job. There are times that the principal and I are divergent in our ideas, and I wish that I could have my way, but I know if I do become a principal I won't get my way all the time anyway so it won't make a difference.

> Definitely for me. I couldn't stay in this position for any length of time, I'd be too frustrated. Like, I don't mind it, because, as I said, I've been given a fair amount of scope and I've been able to do some things, and I'm having to work out all these little things, like teaching and working out time to do all these other things in the school. But I couldn't do it forever, because you have no

> say in the ultimate running of the school. And as far as I'm concerned, the way I feel about schools and how they should be run, I couldn't stay as a vice principal forever, I just couldn't....

This person indicated the time frame that would ideal for him to remain an assistant principal:

> For someone like me, two to three years at the most. Because the first year, I think you learn all the little things like the filling out of forms, and then I think the second year you start to realize how you can make yourself felt in a larger way, and you do start that in the first year, but it takes time. Then I would say by three or four years you have definitely learned how and where you want to go. And then I think it becomes a point where you can't do the things you want to do.

This assistant principal, also thought three years would be ideal:

> I think I will probably apply next year for a principal position, I probably won't get it but I will apply. I would say no longer than about three years. I would say you need at least one year. I have seen in our system, people appointed from a consultant position without being an assistant principal. Some of them have had a very difficult time because the job was just so new. I felt sorry for them, some have subsequently left the principalship and gone back into the classroom simply because they weren't ready for it. I think it was a mistake, I think perhaps our school board has recognized that.

Some assistant principals felt that it is or should be up to the individual whether the position is transitory or not:

> It can be a training ground. I guess it just depends on the individual involved. He can be there forever or he can have his sights set on a principalship.

> I think it is up to the person. I'm told that's why they put you in there as an assistant principal, so you can work up to a principalship. One comment that we got back from central office was that someone up there was a little put off with some of us, and they actually brought our names up, that we didn't apply for some of the principalships... I say that's their problem. I am an assistant principal and I enjoy it and if I don't feel that I want to be a principal, they aren't going to force me. I'll determine when, if I want to go there. And I think it's called a Peter Principle, where they push you and push you and push you until you are inefficient. I figure it is my decision if and when I want to become a principal... if I did it would have to be a small school. I like to know the staff and as many kids as I can, if you get four to five hundred kids, that's a schmozzle. I have thought about it the last couple of years. It comes back and forth so maybe in the next couple of years, if something comes up, I might try it. But I don't feel any need to become a principal now, not for myself, or my ego or anything like that.

This same assistant principal is wary of the principalship if it is going to take over his entire life:

> If I had to sit like a couple of other principals I know, they're there on the weekends and at night trying to organize all this stuff and get it going, and if that's what a principalship requires, forget it! I figure I've got another eleven to fifteen years before I can retire. I don't want to wear myself out on the worry and responsibility...

One person is enjoying the successes in his present position as an assistant principal, and has reservations about what the principalship entails:

> The principal was asking me if I would like to be principal and I don't think I would because I think there's a lot of paper work involved... right now it's not the thing for me... things are falling into place so well, so many good things are happening and I really feel good about the job and I really enjoy having to teach... kids reinforce you... but I like the variety the job provides, it's not all teaching; it's a little of this, a little of that. I think if I was a principal it would be a lot of writing memos or, I don't know what principals really do, making big decisions and writing out budgets and that kind of thing... I might change my mind later... past experience tells me that after three or four years in a job I get bored and want a change... I'd like it to be a totally finished picture, then I'll be ready for a change.

This assistant principal, who is feeling time pressures, has misgivings about a principalship, which he is afraid is even worse:

> I really have misgivings with that (this position leading to a principalship)... because I watch and I see my own principal, how busy he is and where his time is spent, the hours, the kinds of hours, and I ask myself, do I need those kinds of hassles, that kind of frustration? I think that the principal would like to be more of an educational leader and would like to spend less times in the office, and more time in the classrooms. That doesn't happen near as much as he would like it to. He is here by no later than 7:30 in the morning, he seldom leaves before five, usually between five and six. He spends little time in the staff room at noon, and is hardly ever there at recess. He is on supervision every day, he doesn't

> have to be but he usually goes out for fifteen to twenty minutes every day. He tells me that too much time is spent in the office, doing student placement, evaluations, paperwork for various programs. As the school gets older, the population declines, there is a different kind of population, students from single parent families, more social problems, kids bring those problems to the school. They must be dealt with by the counsellor or administration. Invariably, the principal must sort these problems out...

One assistant principal has been discouraged from pursuing a principalship because of the pressures he sees on a principal in a school based budgeting setting:

> Initially when I started, I wanted to be a principal. I think the one thing that has discouraged me more than anything else has been school based budgeting. When I look back on the school system the way it was, the principal didn't have to concern himself with budget and money, and staffing... In some senses, he was more of an educational leader... Now the principal must interview people for positions; he may select staff he feels is appropriate for the goals of the school--- he may be more of an educational leader in that way, but it takes up much of his time... he either has less time or less energy due to increased demands, so that he isn't able to be in the classroom, whereas, in the past, they used to provide the principal with a short list and the principal could make a fairly quick selection. In some cases, a teacher would simply be placed on the staff; now the principal might not agree with the placement, might not have the input that he has today, but at the same time, he may have more free time to be with the staff. Budgeting, as it presently exists, in my opinion, instead of doing it once, you are doing it two, three, four times a year. We start our budgeting process in February, and if you leave it go, you find yourself in a real pinch--- because we have to develop objectives and they're supposed to be in

> measurable terms, then the objectives have to be costed out, in terms of not only your support staff, teaching staff, your aides, your supplies, your equipment, services, professional development, everything, I mean, right down to paper towels and soap. Equipment, furniture, everything, utilities... you totally run this school... he's got to budget for it; he's got to defend that before the trustees. It's got to be approved by the associate superintendent... If your enrolment changes, then your budget allocation changes and that's going to have an impact; depending on how much your enrolment changes, it can have a profound impact on the programs for the school that you set in February, March, April, and May. Come September you find, hey, I can't do that any longer, or I'm going to lose a teacher... the reverse can happen. You can declare one or two teachers surplus and come back and find that enrolment has gone up, and it's nobody's fault, we have done surveys in June... There are some very positive aspects to school based budgeting... you can try and save programs because it is valuable to you...

Outlooks On Promotion

This assistant principal, who is optimistic that opportunities for advancement are available if you are good enough, might look at other career opportunities if promotion was not possible, or could visualize remaining as an assistant principal if it was as a member of an administrative team:

> If it wasn't available, I would look at possibly moving out of schools, or --- I am very interested in education, so that wouldn't be the first thing that would come to my mind, maybe I'd consider going to the university and trying to... I know the job market is tight everywhere, but I still think that they recognize people for their worth and I really feel that over the years I have been

recognized in small ways --- and if you're good, something will come. You may have to take it at God's time, whatever, but... (if nothing was forth coming) I probably would (look for something else) because I would not want to stay in this position forever; I just don't think I could do enough --- unless I was working with someone who was extremely ... open-minded and forward-thinking, where you could work as a team. Not to say that I'm not doing that here, but it would take a lot more work to get to that stage here. But I do know of a few in our system who are working that way and there's a lot of scope with someone like that.

There is optimism that if you are good enough, there will be a promotion available eventually:

While things have been consolidating and probably will continue for the next five or six years, eventually it will grow again, and with retirements and that type of thing, I can't forsee not getting a principalship, just now, for the simple reason of size. If it was a matter of applying and finding out that in these areas I was deficient and not being able to improve them, and the handwriting was on the wall, that I was not going to be a principal, then I would have to deal with it... But I'm good at what I do here and I think that maybe I can be good at being a principal. If there's other people better than I am and if they get the job, great, but eventually it will be my turn. If it turns out that I'm not good enough, I'm not good enough.

But there is uncertainty too:

I always hope by attrition that jobs will always open up. But the way they cut things, I just don't know.

Assistant Principal As a Career

Some assistant principals commented on the assistant principalship as a career position, not leading to a principalship:

> There are people who are well suited to that position, where they don't have the ultimate authority in decision making, but they have a little authority and some of the advantages, also some of the disadvantages, but they're willing to take that tradeoff. Oh, I think there are a lot of people out there who are... can't fathom it myself, but I see men at meetings who have been assistant principals for the last fifteen years... I'd like to see it as a much more dynamic position; it shouldn't be one where you get in and just stop...

> Personally, it would pose a problem for me, from my point of view, because being party to all the middle man things and all that kind of stuff, I think is one of the negative drawbacks of the job. There are some good things about it, but most of it I don't think is positive and so if it were left to me and I was told flat out that I would not be able to be a principal, I think I would go back to the classroom... If someone was in the position of assistant principal and decided that that is their place, I don't think I would have any problem working with them... if they were good at what they did, it would take pressure off the principal. But I wouldn't advise someone to become an assistant principal if they didn't want to become a principal because part of the motivation for doing the things that you do as an assistant principal, is the anticipation of learning for a principalship, and part of that would be lost if they had no intention of becoming a principal.

One assistant principal, commenting on people staying in the role for extended periods of time, felt that they should

move, laterally, if not up:

> I think you would probably get stagnant, and take the job for granted, and not with so many kids involved, that one should allow that to happen... five or six years maybe, and then either apply for higher up or transfer laterally, because then you learn from somebody else.

One person, thinking of the possibility of not having an assistant principalship, due to declining enrolments, or other reasons, would find it difficult to go back to straight teaching:

> If they ended it (the position) there would have to something else available. I would try to get a position of equal stature, or higher. If not I would have to go back to being a regular teacher... I don't think I would like it very much, because again, when you go back its almost a routine, this job is not... so I hope is carries on, for a while anyway.

One assistant principal, concerned about not being effective as an administrator, would consider going back to strictly teaching:

> Who knows, maybe next year I'll realize maybe I'm never going to become a principal. Maybe there's things about the job that I can't do, so far I don't think so; it's not a matter of things I can't do, but things that I have not learned how to do yet... If I decided that I was never going to be one, maybe I'd stay as an assistant principal, or maybe I'd go back into the classroom, I'm not sure... I've worked with a number of vice principals and principals that the Peter Principle has caught up with. And it's very unfortunate that it is viewed as such a step backward... I'm sure there would be an adjustment to go back and be totally happy strictly in the classroom, but

> if it came to the point that I made the decision that I had no further ambitions, I think I could be happy.

One person, hesitant about his ability to do a good job of everything associated with a principalship, could see himself remaining in the assistant principal position for a long term:

> I don't know if I would go so far as to say I would like to remain an assistant principal for the rest of my career, but for the forseeable future, yes. I don't see anything wrong with being a good assistant principal here or anywhere else... I think what I'm saying is that I question my ability a bit. I don't know if others would see it that way or not. My principal will often say that I'm much too hard on myself, that my expectations are way too high. Maybe they're right, maybe I could take over... But I tend to be involved in so many other things that I ask myself would it be fair to expect to continue on doing those things and be a principal of a school at the same time. Could you adequately do a good job of them all? And I think probably that's one of the reasons I'm reluctant is because maybe I've never faced it bluntly, but more or less subconsciously, and thought no, I can't...

As long as he felt uncertain about wanting a principalship, this person felt he could be content to remain as an assistant principal:

> If I wanted a principalship and I couldn't get it, it would bother me, but because I'm kind of ambiguous, and haven't made up my mind that that is what I want... If I didn't want it and I was content to be an assistant principal and nobody ever offered it to me, it wouldn't bother me.

This person, who stated that every job in a school is important, could remain as an assistant principal:

> I could remain an assistant principal for the rest of my career. I guess you have to be realistic, I'm not young and impatient anymore, I became a teacher at age 35 to help children, to teach children. I know that everybody in the school is important, secretaries, janitors... we are all working for the same thing, to make the school a good place to learn. We are all important. I wouldn't feel less important being a classroom teacher rather than an assistant principal. I would feel initial disappointment, but not everybody can have a (principal's) position...

Dependency On Principal

Although the extent of the transitory nature of the job varies, the position is viewed as a training ground. The type and amount of training, which is gained primarily through on the job experience, is highly dependent on the principal:

> I think the training of the assistant principal is almost totally dependent on the principal because if he doesn't want to give you any duties, or if he is dictatorial and only assigns you certain duties, then you would learn whatever he is willing to have you learn, or willing to put out the time to teach you about. I was really lucky that both principals have been very willing to share their knowledge with me and very willing to give me tasks to do. Both of them have given me as much as I want to do. So I've been really fortunate.

> Last year the Principals' Association got together to decide on inservices. New principals are inserviced in our system, new

vice principals are not. I let the committee know, and the area superintendents know that I think they should be. I walked in blind not knowing what I was supposed to do or what things I should be doing. It's strictly between you and the principal. So most of what I think I've learned has just been through experience, working with the principal, having things explained to me when I mess up, and that kind of thing.

Depending on the principal is depending on what you do in the school. I would like to try to make it a little more uniform by identifying things that are common throughout the system, and then common to elementary schools, things that could be done, get people together to provide suggestions, for increasing communication, making it better, trying to train people to become principals, identifying the kinds of jobs, that kind of thing.

There should be something that is common throughout the school system that assistant principals can be inserviced on; there should be accessibility, knowing what everybody else does, could be a little bit more open. A lot of people sit in their little cubby hole in their school and they do the things that they think the vice principal does to become a principal and that's strictly because that's all the principal lets them do. I think there should be a list of things that vice principals should be able to do before they become a principal. And then you are not just going by guess and by golly, because right now, we really are at the mercy of the principal.

Some principals, not mine at all, but some principals are very jealous of their authority and reluctant to relinquish any of it, and as a result, the assistant principal tends to almost be jobless. They are given minor duties, or social type of duties that really

aren't administrative duties.

> I think too, that how necessary the assistant principal is depends a lot on the attitude of the principal and staff, and I suppose their experience with previous assistant principals. I was in a school where the principal wouldn't give the assistant principal anything to do and it wasn't a surprise that they did away with the assistant principal because that person had no function in that school. It was no loss. Not that she didn't want the job, but he wouldn't give it to her... He wasn't really able to handle it well himself, in my opinion, it would have been far better if he had given her something to do.

> The principals determine a lot the experience of the assistant, depending on their personality, how you click, and what their philosophy of administration is... from talking to others, there are some who have had nothing but bad experiences, and they get out or transfer as soon as they can...

Some comments indicated that there may be a potential for unfair assessments of the assistant principal if there were personality conflicts:

> What they are proposing to do is decentralize adminstrative appointments so that it will depend more on evaluations by associate superintendents and principals... I think it will make for very inconsistent evaluations if every principal is, in fact, the ultimate staffing officer, because of all the varied personalities involved... the way it is set up right now, if I wanted to be a principal, I would have to apply to my principal. If he gave me a recommendation that was poor, that would be it; it would not go any further... could be a real weakness in that if you didn't happen to get along with your principal... I'm sure that they are going to have to modify it.

> If (the principal) gave me a poor recommendation (for continuing position), I suppose I could appeal it to the associate superintendent and he could overturn it; if in fact he would go against the principal, I doubt it. I would imagine it depends totally upon the principal. So, that is good because he probably knows you better than anyone else, but that is also bad if you don't happen to get along with your principal, and there have been instances I have heard of in the past, where the principal and assistant principal have not gotten along, personality conflicts I suppose, and the assistant principal was moved to another school and got along very well. A lot does depend on personalities.

Representative of most of the assistant principals, this person believes that principals will be fair and reasonable in assigning the duties and responsibilities of the assistant principals:

> I think the training of the assistant principal is dependent on the principal a great deal. I think some principals could be very narrow in the way they delegate authority and the kinds of responsibilities you are given. I have heard horror stories, I have never run into them, but I have heard where the assistant principal is given responsibility for the entire discipline in the school... that could get awfully demoralizing after awhile if that's all you do, if that's your primary reason for being there. Principals could delegate very narrowly, just have a few specific things that assistant principals are responsible for and have very little input into anything else. But I don't think many principals are like that--- I would hope not anyway.

Aspects Of Training

Some assistant principals commented on other aspects of

their training besides on the job experience.

There were after school inservice programs:

> They sort of instituted a new program where every Monday, for many months, those of us wanting to apply for administrative positions, went to central office and met with the superintendent and various associates. It was kind of an orientation, inservice type of program. They kept a fairly close eye on us for a number of months.

> When I went through the after school sessions, it was a type of training. You were getting a lot of the indoctrination if I can put it that way. The thing that sticks in my mind mostly is that the administrators are primarily in the school to operate that school for the benefit of the students. That's their number one concern. Everything you do, you do with the primary objective being the welfare of the students in that school, what's best for the students of that school. That's why the school is here, that's why the staff is here. The school is not here to serve the staff, and you don't fit the kids to the staff and the kids to the school, and try to manipulate them to fit the school; it is the other way around; you don't have the tail wagging the dog. The superintendent really believes that, and that is what comes across loud and clear.

The value of observation of administrators was mentioned:

> I have watched a number of principals in action. I have worked under some very good principals. The ones who were successful, treated their teachers professionally. They gave them direction and leadership, then let them go... there was supervision of curriculum by the administrators... the majority of teachers are following the curriculum... there is a certain amount of leeway anyway.

> I really don't know why they asked me to be the assistant principal. I took the regular old administration course getting my B. Ed. I have not gone back and taken administration courses; I read administration books and this sort of thing. I've read and I watch. I watch different people and I listen to different people, how they do it. If I think it will fit for me, then I'll try it... Sometimes people tell me that you can't move anywhere or become a principal if you don't have a masters, ph. d. or something like that. I say, "Well fine, if that's what it takes to become a principal, then I'm not there, so I guess I won't become a principal." There's a lot of things that I could learn, but I think you learn by doing, listening, watching, and you pick out your own sort of things that you feel are important in running a school. I've had very little training in running a school, other than direct observation and listening and reading. Maybe it's hurt me in some ways that I don't know, and I could be better, but I don't think I need to go and get that.

Courses in administration were not helpful:

> Administrative courses didn't help. They were too general. And of course when I took them, I wasn't in administration so I didn't have a chance to apply any of the things at all.

Responsibility for Their Own Success

While acknowledging a general dependency upon the principal, assistant principals also indicated that they feel a responsibility for assuring their own success. Some indicated philosophical thoughts indicating self-responsibility and some indicated actions that they had taken to assure their success.

The role of the assistant principal is, number

> one, what the assistant principal makes of it. The role of the assistant principal is what the principal designs it to be, also. And it really depends on the rapport that the person has with the principal, and on the other hand, with the teachers.
>
> Once you get into the position, you're really on your own, you can make or break the position.
>
> I've seen a number of assistant princpals in action in the schools that I've been at. In the one case there didn't seem to be very much communication between the administrators, it was kind of a wishy washy situation. In the other case, it was excellent, the rapport and that kind of thing. And I kind of modelled myself on this particular assistant principal. She was a very effective administrator, so I tried to emulate a lot of things that she did. Some of the things I had to drop because it didn't suit my personality.
>
> I can get myself into a rut and get down, so I look at my sign, "If it is to be, it is up to me." When I get down and depressed, I figure, okay, it's my problem that I am here, I don't want to feel like that, so let's work at something to get out of it.

This assistant principal stressed that it is up to the assistant principal to do something about their own future and happiness:

> ...other than stressing that it is up to the individual person, if they got into the situation in a school as an assistant principal, where they could not work with the principal, and were uptight and didn't want to come to school, get out as soon as possible. To me, if the administration cannot work

> together, the whole school--- it's going to be a problem... it is not worth it. You have to be able to get along, and work, enjoy it, have some fun in your job, but not if you're uptight and worried all the time, you've got to watch what you say, and there's conflict; I'd get out and I'd suggest to anybody else in that situation to leave; it's not worth it really.

One assistant principal, when frustrated about the lack of communication between the principal and himself, became assertive with the principal in order to improve the situation:

> I really felt that I had to get to know him and he had to get to know me, because I really don't think he was utterly convinced that: a) I could teach, b) I could be a vice principal. So it took us until about November to get on the right track, like we weren't even discussing things. And one day I just thought to myself, this is crazy, I don't know what's going on in the school. I said to him, "We need to meet on a weekly basis and discuss what's coming up and discuss staff meetings so I know..." It has become a really good time where we sit down and discuss what's happening, who's doing what, what we should do in the staff meeting, what the agenda should be, what kind of things --- like, he shares all the principal kinds of things that come across his desk, the information they get as principals --- they get all sorts of really interesting information that I never get to see unless he chooses to share it. And he xeroxes it now and leaves it on my desk, which I felt was a real positive thing because they don't have to do that. That was probably the biggest breakthrough that he and I had and I think it was about that time that he thought, hey, that class is shaping up, because he knew it (my class) was a difficult group.... so that started to reassure him...

This person transfers to different schools to gain the desired experience:

> One of the reasons I left that school was that I thought I was particularly lacking in that area (budget)... the principal's past experience with budgeting in the school was that it was best that he do it all himself, and I didn't think that he would be opening up totally in the next one year... I thought I could learn the finances someplace else, that's why I moved here...
> I move around because I like to take what one principal can give to me, and learn from them, and what they're not strong at I can move to another principal, and learn what they're strong at, until I am able to be a principal, but as I move more and more, I find there's more and more things I don't know about. But maybe that should be identified to people.

This person felt that at this level, the onus for professional development is on the individual:

> There have not been ongoing training sessions, but that is not to say that there are not things that you can avail yourself of. You can go to special sessions, usually those things are provided at conventions. A lot of the onus, once you reach the position, is upon yourself, to avail yourself of different kinds of inservicing, to read--- we have a good professional library... as well as other organizations you can belong to that provide leadership training. Then you can always upgrade yourself by taking university courses. The primary onus is on yourself.

Self-evaluation of Readiness for Promotion

Assistant principals often referred to the areas in need of further training and experience in determining their degree of readiness for promotion. Budget, teacher

appraisal, and effective teaching strategies were key concerns.

The need for training in budget and teacher appraisal was indicated:

> Realizing how much more I need to know before I become a principal, that's one of the things, not having worked with the budget, and especially teacher appraisal, I am going to have to take some courses on that type of thing, otherwise I am not going to be able to do a job as well as I would like to do. If I applied for a principalship next year and got it, I'd do the job, but, I didn't apply this year and I don't know whether I will apply next year. I don't think I'm ready.

Teacher effectiveness and more university administration courses:

> Before I become a principal, I've got to learn more about teacher effectiveness, helping good teachers become better, helping teachers who are competent become more competent, helping teachers who are not competent become competent, and building skills for helping those who are not competent and probably never will be competent find something else that they can do. That's number one. I'm still not 100% sure that I will be able to handle the finances, that's only going to come through practice. I will probably, in the next little while, go back and get a masters degree in educational administration. The more I learn the more I see there is to learn. Those are the basic things that I think I have to learn before I think I will be ready, and then if I apply and don't get it, I will be really disappointed, and think maybe I should have applied two years ago and get myself known.

Budget and more administration courses:

I do have some administrative classes from the university, which I think are important and I'd like to have more than I have. But it's a matter of learning what you have to do. In our system, budget is a terribly big burden for any principal. If you went straight from a classroom to being a principal, you wouldn't know where to start. There are so many hours of work, forms, formulas; it's just terrible. I wouldn't be ready to be a principal next year. I have helped the principal this year, with budget, hopefully I will take over more next year, just learn.

Budget:

I think I have done just about everything in every role that the principal has this year at some time, when he has been away. I think I am learning about the whole thing; some areas I have had more experience in than others, and the budget is one where I do feel I need the practice. I haven't worked very much with parent liason groups, not because I'm not interested, the meetings are on the same night as A.T.A. so I just can't be there.

I wanted to, and I wanted to this year and I couldn't because of time constraints again. The one thing that I have not been able to do in this school as an assistant principal, is to actually work with the dollars and cents of the budget. I have been in on the developing goals, objectives, priorities, whatever, but where it actually comes to costing those priorities out and doing the paperwork... going through the budget manual... that part I haven't done.

Generally speaking, yes, (this has been a training ground and I could assume a principalship) but the only big question mark is the dollar and cents... when you step into that place in the fall, you really have to know what you are doing when it comes to the budget.

I don't feel confident enough to do the job (of principal). He does a lot more PR for example than I ever do... the whole budget thing scares me; the writing of newletters and things like that, I don't like; the running of the staff meeting is not something that I would enjoy; so right now I'm just not ready for anything like that.

Not ready yet for having to make the final decisions:

I am not really a pusher, a go-getter, and people have asked me, "You have been an assistant principal for so long, why don't you apply for a principalship?" They have suggested that, "Hey, you could handle it all right." I say, "Well, maybe I could, but I am still learning, even though I have been an assistant principal for fourteen years." I call myself a slow learner in some areas. I am comfortable, and if I get bored or in a rut then I will consider it. But here, the principal gives me enough responsibility and enough authority if you want to call it that, where I am basically almost like the principal at times... But then there's final decisions that bother me, they say I'm an old softie at times, but I figure, thank goodness, (principal), you're the principal, you've got to make that decision after we have talked about it. I find that very hard and maybe someday I will have to learn how to do it. But I'm not ready for that right now.

More knowledge of curriculum:

The curriculum bothers me. If I ever became a principal, I would have to check and double check... I try to keep up with them but it's not my forte to read all these pamphlets that come in...

More knowledge of learning disabilities:

I am starting to feel that I need to learn about learning disabilities, because of the

> integration of the handicapped... if you're going to be a good administrator you have to understand more about learning disabilities than I know about... a gap in my education, in everybody's education unless you take those courses... I do feel that need, that gap in my education.

One person feels that the more they learn, the more they see there is to learn:

> I am leaving here at the end of the year, knowing that I am less prepared than I ever was to be a principal and that's not a reflection on her, it's a compliment to her, because she's taught me that there are more things than I realized about becoming a principal.

IV. A JACK-OF-ALL-TRADES

When describing what the job is like, the assistant principals referred to the constant variety; the interruptions; the need to be flexible, to expect the unexpected, to be organized, and to get along with people---to be a "jack-of-all-trades." They identified the rewards associated with the position, as well as the frustrations. They identified the personal characteristics and qualifications that would be required to do the job in view of what it is like.

What the Job is Like

The assistant principals all reported that the job is dynamic, interesting, and varied:

> Jack-of-all-trades? Master of none?

> Everyday is different.

> But I enjoy it. It's challenging, it's interesting, you never know what's going to happen.

> It's a very dynamic job. I really like it. I really enjoy it.

> It is routine, but it's not. So many other things happen in a day.

> It's kind of a nice position. You're not the principal who has the final decision, sometimes that's scary, if you're stuck with the final decision that affects so many lives, and yet you have enough decision making that you feel good about it and that's the part that I like.

> Well, it's interesting, if you don't like to get into a rut. You never know what's going to happen, and you can plan to sit and mark tests or do a project on something new one morning and it might be a week before you can get back to it... You have to work closer with the whole staff... you have to be known to the kids... you have to know about the whole school, where the furnaces are, where the power is; the caretakers are here, but the meter man will come in and want to know where's this, that, and the caretaker is not around. You have to know how the school runs, mechanically, electrically... when maintenance

> people come I like to go with them and find out what's wrong so that I would know the next time... you have to learn to get along with central office staff... the parents, both the principal and I deal a lot with parents; you have to know when to be firm and when to back off... you have to learn how to do a lot of paperwork... It's an interesting job. As I say, if you want to get into a rut, don't become an administrator, because you never know what's going to happen.

> I am very pleased. I would not want to do anything else unless it was to be a principal. Have my feelings changed? Yes, they probably have; things look differently viewing the role than actually doing the role; so I'm sure some of my feelings have changed, but not my liking of the position. I haven't been disappointed. It has lived up to my expectations and probably more than my expectations. It has also been more frustrating than I expected it to be sometimes. No, I wouldn't change it.

Hours of Work

In describing what their job and their work life is like, many assistant principals elaborated on their work hours:

> I am usually at my desk at seven in the morning; I'm a morning person... I always try to have specific plans one or two days ahead of time for my class because I never know when I'm going to be interrupted. I have to be prepared to not be in the classroom, today for instance, the principal was unexpectedly away; he sent a sub in for himself; the sub went into my class, and I came into here... try to do some marking at noon hour and again after school... if I don't have a meeting after school, I usually go home about four or four-thirty.

I'm not a morning person, so I don't get in here really early. I'll get here about eight-thirty and then I usually leave about five o'clock. As the summer gets closer and I play more golf, that would be five o'clock about three days a week. But from the first of September till about the first of May, my hours are generally eight-thirty to five... four of the five days a week, I am either in the gym supervising lunch for half an hour of the fifty-five minute lunch hour or supervising intermurals... I take very little home. I probably should take more home, but I have a young family and want to spend some time with them... I come back here for two to three hours on Sunday nights, from seven to ten generally, that's where I lay out my plans for the week...

I like to get to school really early. It gives me a chance to gather my wits, plan my day, and I'm a list maker; I write a list of everything that has to be done that day... the principal comes in shortly after I do; we talk about what the day holds... I come about 8:00 a.m. so that gives me about thirty minutes before the students come.

Noon hours could be my own but I choose for it not to be, but I eat with my class (bussed students), which is not normal, but I do anyway because it makes things move a little faster, then I go into the staff room for a little while, just to pick up on what's going on, or what the latest worries are, or what the ups are, and that kind of thing, and then I walk the halls after that... Sometimes I'm here till four-thirty, five, and other days, like today, I intend to rush out, because there's a hockey game on... I like to stay at school until my work is done, rather than take it home... I make good use of my administrative time, I do it all here...

One person noted that in administration, you work until it's done:

> That's one thing with administration, you just keep working until it is done, sometimes it continues when you are at home, you get a call, a child has not come home yet... that's the hardest thing to get used to for me because I am a very organized person. I find that my life is very disrupted; you start one job and you have to leave it and go to another job, and then come back to the first thing; you can't be terribly organized, to say that I'm going to work for this long... you can't do that because if someone needs you, they need you.

In describing his hours, this assistant principal shared his philosophy of keeping work hours reasonable and having more to life than just your work:

> I like to get here about seven-thirty. I like that half-hour on my own. I get my day organized... at eight the staff start coming in; some come in with a problem; then about eight-thirty I wander into the staff room to see what people are doing and again, you try to read people and see who might be a little up tight... I wander into the halls, see the kids, then go down to the office and make announcements... our classes are over at 3:25 p.m. I help on the computer one day a week at noon and after school. On those days I get out of here at four-fifteen or four-thirty. But usually once the kids are gone and most of the staff is gone, I'm out of here by quarter to four. Once I've done my jaunt around the school, I take off, unless there is something that has to be done... The principal's philosophy is that if it can't be done by then and it has to be done, fine, we will stick around and finish it, but if we can do it early in the morning and during the day, then at quarter to four, why stick around just for the sake of sticking around... I try to organize my time; sitting in the staff room during lunch time for an hour doesn't really appeal to me, I use my lunch hours... I'm not going to spend my whole life teaching, like

> some of our staff. I keep telling them that they are going to burn themselves out... I try to stress to them... you have got to have some fun time, go out and do some of the things you want, have a change of pace, but day after day... I couldn't handle that. If I had to do what they do, I would be out of teaching. There's too many things out there that I feel that you've got to--- that's my little sign up there, I look at it every morning--- "You only live once, but if you live right once is enough."

This same person feels that they would change careers if they needed to give up all their free time, even at this middle or later stage of their career:

> I try not to work evenings and weekends if I can help it. There's dedication and there's dedication, and if I can get away with it, and I'm doing my job in the time I have allotted for my job--- if I need that time, fine, as long as I don't do night after night after night. If I did, I would seriously consider going back, and even at my age, consider getting something else. I am not the type of person who could handle that.

One assistant principal stated that meetings and involvement in outside activities fill up his time:

> I am usually here about eight o'clock, and I usually leave around four-thirty... I don't usually take work home, because I don't have the time... usually I have two to four meetings after school in a week... A.T.A.... community... coach hockey... swim club... liason meetings with the school board... school staff meetings...

Most assistant principals indicated, as this person elaborated, that they start back one or two weeks before

school starts in the fall:

> We come back the middle of August; this year it might me a little later, because school doesn't start until after Labor Day... but there's a lot to do, timetables have to be copied out, schedules have to be made, book rooms have to be straightened out, piddly little things... I don't know if I'm required to be here, but how else would I get things done? It's nice. It's a leisurely way of doing things, and it gets done. That's when I do my teaching planning for the year as well. I don't mind coming back at all.

Disciplinarian

The assistant principal as disciplinarian is a dominant theme in the literature. These assistant principals report that they do deal with discipline, but that the duty, which they report is not excessive, is shared with the principal:

> We work closely together (on discipline). If it is anything to do with the playground and I'm here, I handle it. If it is serious enough to warrant suspension or if it's an incident that we see someone's name repeatedly in the book, then we handle it together; other than that, verbal communication. We keep each other informed.

> He does more of the discipline because he is around more than I am, and people are reluctant to take me out of my classroom, and rightly so, because when I am teaching, that is my primary role and must remain that.

> Whoever is in the office answers the phone. Whoever is in the office handles the discipline. There's not one bad guy among the administrators. Whoever is there, does it.

> It depends who is here and what's going on. I tend to deal with the majority of the minor things... If it's minor the principal and I don't even collaborate. But if it's some major thing... we make notes, talk... but whoever is around and how serious it is...

> It's handled by both of us. If something comes up and I am available, and I've got the time, I deal with it. We try to deal with it right on the spot. We have a school wide discipline policy, that I initiated...

One assistant principal stated that although the amount of time spent on discipline has been reduced with the introduction of school-wide discipline programs, discipline is not a big issue because the teachers are good:

> At the beginning of the year, there was a lot more discipline. But a lot of people have been working under the same system, so it's really eased itself out a lot. I very seldom deal with a lot of discipline. I think everyone has sort of taken another look, but I also think there weren't a lot of problems to begin with. The teachers are really good teachers.

Clerical/Custodial

The assistant principals indicated that clerical and custodial types of duties were minimal and were largely handled by the support staff in the school:

> I don't do very much of that (running off sheets, setting up chairs, etc.). Sometimes I change bulletin boards, but that to me is part of the role of a teacher, so that I do. We pretty well have kids doing a lot of those kinds of things, setting up chairs, those

kinds of things. There are some things, like cleaning the gym storage room, sort of keeping an eye on that; I work fairly closely with the facilitator, who comes in once a week, checking the equipment... But basically we've got such good people working in the school, like the caretaker is excellent, the secretary is really good. A lot of the stuff I can do is over and above that, which is really nice.

Not especially (clerical duties), not the second year, the first year, yes, but it was learning those particular things... the biggest rude awakening, all those things that I didn't know how they got done when I was a classroom teacher, I found out who did them! And all the leg work, and clerical things, I did them, but a lot of that changed the second year because I was able to make use of other staff members, sharing those kinds of things, so that I would look over the forms that came in, and anything that caught my eye I would ask about, but there was a lot more passing on to the teachers, the responsibilities as well.

I really don't do, I can't think of what I do that is specifically clerical. Orders come to me, but they have been cleared through the other channels (subject coordinators); I just kind of okay it... I write memos once in a while and that sort of thing, but I don't really think there is much clerical work. There's a lot of action... more in the field kind of action, practical kinds of things.

Supervision

A few assistant principals have had teacher supervision as part of their responsibilities:

Supervision both of children and of teachers. With supervision of children, I don't go out on supervision. What I do do, as do both of the other administrators, is we constantly

> walk the halls, at recess and noon hours, just to have the extra bodies around... make ourselves really visible... Supervision of teachers means going into classrooms to some extent... I make up the supervision schedules, and do some chasing. Supervision of instruction, each one of us look after several areas. I look after language arts and special ed.

This assistant principal tries to keep teacher observation very informal, but still finds it difficult:

> Classroom supervision, in the sense of going in and observing teachers, making suggestions for change, or doing write-ups for teachers; I don't do those very much, I just do write-ups for myself and keep them on file. The principal does the formal write-ups. When an evaluation has to go into central office, he does those. But part of my job is to go in and make sure that what needs to be done is being done... I try to go into every class at least once. With the new teachers, especially those that we feel need a fair amount of guidance, I've been a lot more times... quite often meet after school, I will make suggestions, help them write up their lesson plans better... I think they probably feel more comfortable with me going in than they do with the boss going in because I try and keep it very informal. In most cases it is really easy to be very positive because there really are some super teachers, but there are some new ones who are a little raw and need some suggestions... it's a very awkward situation; I don't feel comfortable at all, going in and doing that, because there's a good relationship and all of a sudden, here you are going in and you're evaluating. I feel awkward, that's the only part of the job I feel awkward about... it's something that has to be done and that's what I'm paid to do, that's part of it, so I do it; but not something that I do with any degree of relish.

One assistant principal would prefer to go into

teacher's classrooms as another pair of hands:

> I would rather spend time in teacher's classrooms as another pair of hands, helping out. That is usually how I go in. We are very welcome in the classroom. Teachers really like to see us; they'd like to see us a lot more. I would say that by and large they don't see us as any kind of a threat in the classroom. Now there may be some who feel that way, but if there are I don't know who they are. We don't do written evaluations based on any of these visits. The principal does the written evaluations. I am not the staff's immediate supervisor, the principal is; so when it comes to written evaluations, he does those. Primarily, the written evaluations would be for permanent certification or someone going from a temporary to a continuing contract or something like that...

Rewards

In describing what the job is like, the assistant principals indicated a number of things that contribute to the rewards of the job, that make the job worthwhile.

> I would say that feeling of support you get that people think you're all right and that you can make an impact.

> Being able to help other people accomplish what they want to accomplish.

One person talked about an incident in which a teacher provided support and positive feedback:

> A teacher, who is not a critical person, but the type where, if you get her support, you've really got a lot of support; she doesn't say a lot; she said to me, in front of the principal

and a couple of other people, "You know, I don't what it is, but since you've come to this school, you've really made a difference." I was so surprised, because I didn't think she felt good or bad about me, but I didn't think she felt all that good about me... I was surprised she said it, and that she said it in front of the people she said it.... That really did make a difference for me; all of a sudden I realized, hey, you aren't battling upstream the whole way; some people are noticing that some things are happening.

Helping teachers and being thanked:

Being able to help teachers. Everyday there is some little reward. Just for somebody to say thank you, that helps, it's a reward in itself, so there's lots of little rewards and some big ones.

Positive feedback from parents:

We had our spring concert, which was very successful... we had some phone calls, letters, and comments from parents, that was very rewarding. Every once in a while, you get a call from a parent saying thank you, that is a reward. There are so many rewards, so varied; most of them are small.

Not money:

If you want to do it for money, forget it, unless you are in some place like Ainley or something, where you are getting a horrendous allowance; but don't become an assistant principal or principal if you are looking at the adminstrative allowance because for the average school it isn't worth it, if that's all you're doing it for.

Being privileged to what is going on in the school:

The rewards aren't anything unless you look for them, like, I took a paycut to come to this school, but the travelling is better, but not the money. I may take another paycut to go to the next school... There's more to this business than I thought there was. One of the things about being a vice principal is that you are privileged to things; you are able to find out about things. You are able to do more things; maybe that's a reward; I don't know.

Successful accomplishment of an unpleasant administrative task:

I was given the choice of appraising that person or not, and I knew it was going to be tough, but I said I'd do it. I did it and it wasn't easy, and unfortunately she resigned. But it was the best thing that happened overall. Yeah, I did a good job on that. And that sticks out in my mind as a tangible reward... The students benefited, the staff benefited, the teacher benefited, will benefit in the long run. But it wasn't pleasant to do.

Seeing a project through from conception to completion:

When you start a project, and you organize it, first of all, the idea is yours, and you plan in your mind, then you plan on paper, then you talk to staff, you put your plan into effect, then finally when it's over, and you can sit back and you realize that it was successful, that you accomplished what you set out to accomplish--- that is a great reward, just knowing that you were able to plan something and bring it to fruition.

Making a difference:

One major thing... we're now going into expressive language, and receptive language... finally got the teachers believing in this

kind of thing; so big changes are happening there; so that really made me feel good because that really was initiated by me. And the second big change is that we have just finished restructuring our report card, and it has fallen into place extremely well, as well; so I'm on a real high right now. I'm extremely tired because we put in a lot of hours.

Helping children with problems:

I think the biggest reward I get out of it, dealing with some of the children who have all kinds of problems, academically, socially... you work with them for three or four months... the reward I see is when you see them changing, and they aren't having so much trouble out in the playground... the kid sees it is better this way... he sits and cools off rather than using his fists... The other thing is you work hard to try to get the staff to work as hard as they can together. There's always cliques, but if you can make it a comfortable, and relaxing as possible, staff relationship, then you can just watch and the school just seems to click, click, click; everybody is doing real good. And when you can get something like that going for a month or two...

Self satisfaction is a reward:

The highlights are, for me anyway, a self satisfaction with what I'm doing, feeling good about the things that I do and the fact that I have helped to initiate changes. Quite often staff members will say, "That was a super idea," or "Thanks for that piece of advice." Or if I say to someone, "You know you really did a super good job," or "I really like that bulletin board you did," and you see them beam then you know that you've made their day for them. Intangibles; I can't think of a tangible reward. I am not in it for the money. There are a lot of people who are under the impression that administrators make

> huge big allowances. The amount of allowance I get is so piddly, I don't think anyone would want to go into it for the money. But it's all the intangible things.
>
> Self satisfaction primarily I guess.

Frustrations

In describing what the job is like, the assistant principals indicated a number of frustrations.

This person was frustrated because he was not able to make the final decisions, and also because he does not have enough time:

> My greatest frustration is the fact that the ultimate decision rests with somebody else, and as much as you may want to do something, if you don't get it passed there, then it doesn't go. And I think that those kind of decisions made, particularly those affecting the people you work with are the hardest to deal with, because you do want to treat people fairly, and I felt that (in one incident) we were painted with the same brush because of the decision that was made unilaterally. Then, my next biggest frustration is that I am dying to do all sorts of things like professional development, or curriculum across the grades, or some sort of program development, and there a) isn't enough time because I'm teaching too much, and b) there is again, this limitation--- like, there seems to be, if you're willing to stretch out and get it, there seems to be money available out there because I had no problem at all in getting what I needed, and there seems to be a lot of people willing to support you if you show a grain of initiative, but if you're working with someone who isn't all that interested in doing it--- like, I'd just like to get the school year over with, it becomes an uphill.

Others felt frustrated by not being able to make final decisions:

> As a vice principal my hands are sometimes tied because the principal doesn't view that particular goal, what I want to do or the teacher wants to do, and therefore it doesn't get done. And that's frustrating, but that's his or her professional opinion as well, and maybe in the long run I'll learn that they were right, and a lot of times they are.

> There are some things that I can't make a decision on my own and if they come up when the principal isn't here, and I have to wait, that is frustrating.

Not enough time:

> I don't have enough time. I need more time... I don't feel that it is ever easy to do two jobs, but I think administrators should teach... you could be a better administrator if you had more time. But having said all that, I think it is quite possible to do both jobs, just making sure that you find the time. You could be better with more time, but everybody could be.

> Sometimes I wish I had a little more time to sit down and think, and be more inventive, and make some changes. You get going along in sort of a nice rut...

> I like being an assistant principal and I like teaching. I like both aspects of my job. What I find frustrating is that you don't have enough time to do an adequate job of both, particularly when you are working at three-tenths or two-tenths, or something like that. You still have the full brunt of your administrative duties to do; if it's cut back, you just have less time to do it in, plus an

> increased teaching load, plus whatever else you're involved in. Sometimes I feel that maybe I should jump one way or the other, either become a full-time teacher and concentrate on that, or go into administration with more time, move to a school where I could get more administrative time.

> Not being able to spend enough time with the staff, not being in the classroom enough, getting to know kids. I would like to go into the classroom where you know that a teacher needs extra time, another pair of hands... a few years ago we were able to do some of that, but the assistant principal's time has been cut and cut and cut, now we can't do that kind of thing... it's nice to go in and find out what they are up against... you can teach a class for them, see what their class is like... at the same time you get a feel for what is going on; the teacher feels good about you being in there; they feel good about you; the morale is good... those are the kinds of things that really build staff morale.

However, three assistant principals indicated that although shortage of time was sometimes a frustration, they felt that overall their allotment of administrative time was adequate:

> I make good use of my administration time. I don't take it home at all... Yes, I think it's pretty equitable, but then again, I haven't had that much more so I don't know...

> I find that very adequate (allotted administrative time)... usually it's balanced off very well... My schedule has not changed much at all, that's partly because I think I do get a generous amount of administration time. Had I less time to do the same duties, yes, I would be spending a lot more of my own time.

This person finds that he can get most administrative things done in his allotted administration time:

Yes, I take very little home...

However, this person indicated that he goes in most Sunday nights for a couple of hours to do his marking and preparation.

Teacher appraisals are frustrating when you are not sure what to look for:

> Both (appraisals) caused me a lot of anxiety. It was the first time that I had ever been in someone's class, and my personal feeling is that as much as you try to make these things positive, teachers rightly or wrongly feel that you are looking for something; so I went in probably with more trepidation than the teachers I was observing, because having to write something down, which was something I did not have to do in the first two years; this is the first year I am doing it; I was worried about how I would write things down, what I would look for. I tried to find something from our board about things to look for, appropriate behaviors and strategies that good teachers show, other than that I am just looking for things that I like, which may be just my personal style... I didn't find anything from our board. I talked to a number of people, principals, whether or not there were things available like that... I went to the library... I wish we had things like that. I wish things like Madeline Hunter, and teacher effectiveness programs were more available to principals and assistant principals because I know that appraisal of staff is something that some principals look forward to with an awful lot of trepidation, because they're not trained in the skills; I'm not trained in the skills... I found it very difficult to go into someone's class and

identify things that were not right. It was easy for the people who were excellent teachers; it was just a matter of being specific... tell them this is what you did, this is why it worked and even if they know that, it's nice to be patted on the back... but where I found it difficult was the teacher who was having difficulties... I would like checklists, more information readily available... according to our superintendent and what looks to be the trends, administration is going to be much more involved in appraising (formative) and evaluating (summative).

Teacher appraisals, if not positive, can be very difficult tasks:

The same incident, the appraisal, there were a couple of times that I thought, well, let's carry her for two months and then make sure she doesn't come back here, but then I thought, well no, that's not handling things right. Maybe it's time to just head back to the classroom because I don't like this!

Neglecting excellent teachers:

Some of the other frustrating things, coming to the realization that, like in a class of thirty students, you always have some that are better than the others and some less able. You can get caught in the trap of spending your time with the less able students. And the same thing happens in schools... some excellent teachers doing a tremendous job... you can neglect them.

Lack of funding:

Lack of money is frustrating. I might as well say it--- government grants bother me, but I don't have any control over that; the principals don't have any control over that. It's frustrating to want to do something and

find that you don't have the bucks for it.

Parents can be frustrating:

There are times that dealing with parents becomes very frustrating... we have 99.9% proof that this boy threw a rock and broke a window in the school, and the boy just denies, denies, denies, and changes his story five different times, but Dad says, "My son will never tell a lie." And the frustration of not being able to teach the student to be honest, admit it if he did it...

I got about three nasty calls from parents, not about my students, but about what some teachers had done or somebody had beat up their child on the way home from school, insinuating that it was all the school's fault. But those days don't happen every day fortunately, and there are not many parents like that fortunately...

Sometimes there are unexpected frustrations. You think you are doing something that you think would really help a student and the parents complain, but that happens as a classroom teacher too.

Too much of other people's responsibilities:

Okay, maybe I'll mention that too. The first year I did too much. I did things that were not my responsibility. I took things off the teacher's shoulders, "If you've got any discipline problems, send them down to me." And learned very quickly, that yeah, I got everybody's discipline problems. All of sudden they stopped handling them and that didn't mean the discipline problems went away, but they ceased to be able to handle them and do things that they can do. The second year I changed that a little bit.

Constant interruptions:

I didn't know there were going to those constant interruptions. I think that's the thing that aggravates me the most are the constant interruptions. I understand that they have to be but if I could change one thing, that is what I would change.

Not enough communication with the principal:

Another frustration is that sometimes he forgets to tell me something that is going on, and people assume that I know when I don't, and I find that very frustrating... It affects my job so much... I can't be organized if I don't know what is going on. That's one of our problems that we are working on, trying to work out a method so that we communicate everything with each other. Sometimes I do something that surprises him. If we did have a regular time to communicate and we wrote down what we were going to talk about... sometimes I do write a list, and go in and shut the door and say, "Okay, have you got an hour?"

Small irritations:

Frustrations are just the kind of day I'm having, small things may bug me. Often times it will be people who are not where they are supposed to be when they are supposed to be--- that really frustrates me. Or people who are late, that really frustrates me. Or people who forget to do what they are supposed to do. Or if suggestions that have been made for change have not been followed through on. Or not knowing what to do with incorrigible children is very frustrating. Or you've bent over backwards doing things for somebody and they turn around and make a negative comment... sometimes, not very often, but sometimes, it is almost a thankless job... but not once have I ever thought this job was not worth it... only fleeting frustrations... it could get

very frustrating, but I think you've got to not let it get to you.

I wish they'd give me a phone.

Trying to be fair with students, making the best decision:

> Lots of times I have to make the final decision... but when you are dealing with personal, kids, their feelings, what is right, what will help the most, I find that the most frustrating possible. I could be a little more aggressive with kids; I could scare them and so on, but I very seldom raise my voice, and sometimes figure, the only way this kid is going to learn is by me raising my voice and... then I figure, no, that's not me. That's the most frustrating thing, dealing with kids' emotions when you've got them in a discipline type thing... dealing with the staff is frustrating sometimes, but nothing like dealing with the kids. Paperwork, trying to keep up is another frustrating thing but that's part of the job and I don't particularly like a lot of paperwork but it's there... another thing is when you have something planned and you have to get something done and you're trying to work on it and you get interrupted seven or eight times... and your train of thought keeps getting broken, that's frustrating but I accept that... to me the only main frustration is dealing with the kids as persons, when they send five down and you try to get the stories straight... five different stories...

When asked if there was a critical incident in the last month that made the job seem worthwhile, this person indicated a general feeling of low morale as standing in the way of positive feelings:

> Not over the last month or so, I don't think. The morale is low in schools, not just our school, every school; subs say the same thing, because there are so many people that are declared surplus, that are worried about their jobs... teachers are getting bombarded in the news continually either by the Department of Education, or by the university, or by the parents, or just by the newspapers in general... about incompetent teachers, intolerant teachers, teacher evaluation. Everybody seems to be kicking teachers lately. You take that plus declining enrolments, greater social problems, all kinds of things like that, teachers feel as though they are under a lot of stress. I think the economy has something to do with it as well. There seem to be greater and greater demands put on teachers as far as all the new curriculum that is being changed, updated... computers... evaluation... maybe it just has something to do with the way we live... Right now, I feel low.

This person indicated that frustrations are minimal and are forgotten by the next day:

> I would say three or four times in the last nine or ten years, have I got up in the morning and thought, gee I can't stand this; you know, my mind has been--- oh, I've got this and that to do today, but not to the point where I feel that I don't want to come back. There are nights when I leave here that I feel, this isn't what I want, but you have a relaxing evening, and feel, okay, let's go back and see if you can handle that in a different way so you don't come out so up tight at night. But I would say honestly, three or four times in the last nine or ten years is all I have felt like that.

Characteristics For Assistant Principals

When describing what the job is like, a number of

assistant principals suggested the characteristics that they think would be necessary to be an effective assistant principal.

They need to have a broad vision for education and be a model for others:

> I think they have to be able to take on educational leadership. I think they have to be able to look on a school as a larger place. You are a model in your teaching; you are a model in administration, in whatever you are doing. You have to be able to show these people that are your peers that you have something to give, that you have something to offer.

Good educational background, varied teaching experiences, good interpersonal skills, and be a leader in more ways than one:

> I would say you need to have a good backing educationally. I think you have to know what's being taught in schools; you can't just know one grade and stop there. You have to have an idea of what's going on; you have to know expectations for many grade levels, or at least for one division, know what to expect from a grade four, grade five, grade six for instance. Maybe you can't know every division but you have to know at least that... you have to have a few teaching experiences... in terms of education and in terms of discipline... I think you really have to have good interpersonal skills. You have to be able to tell people what you want them to do in a nice way. Like this year, with the clerical staff, you can't just go in and say, "Will you put this up for me?" because although you may be entitled to say that, a lot of people can't take someone who's too out front, so you have to be able to get people working for you and then when they get to know you, you can be a little more directive... you have to able to take on the authority and not wear it as a

> heavy authoritarian role but wear it with enough subtlety that you get your point across but that you don't alienate them...
> If you're going to be a leader in this school you have to be a leader in more ways than one. I think too, in your personal life you have to be able to model good teaching, fairness, I don't know, those kinds of things that we look to in people who lead other people. I think you have to be on that leading edge, whether it's in your personal life, whatever. I believe in taking in cultural events, going to things... staying abreast of life... be prepared to devote a lot of time...

Good time management skills, a "strong stomach," and someone who wants to be a principal:

> Someone who could use their time well. The biggest thing I'm finding is that my time on task is pretty critical. I think even though I indicated to you that the time I'm spending at school is not a great deal different than it was when I was teaching, the burden of responsibility is different. Someone who is going to go into administration had better have a strong stomach; it's not a place for ulcers. Someone who can deal well with the public. Probably someone who hopes to be a principal. I don't know whether I'd advise someone who just wants to be an assistant principal, just to get out of the bunch, and then leave it at that. Because it is such a middle man position. I don't know if that's come through heavy enough or not, but there's some things you can do and accomplish and feel good about, and there are some things that you feel powerless over, you are just kind of in the middle and have no control over and become frustrated with it.

A successful teacher, good with people, creative, and even-tempered:

> I think first and foremost (an assistant principal needs to be) a successful teacher;

somebody who likes children; is well organized; has good rapport with parents, with people in general in the district; somebody who is creative, has good ideas and will work to put those ideas to fruition. You have to remain cool in emergencies. You have to be able to take a lot of abuse from parents, sometimes. And you have to be able to take that abuse without losing your cool, and try to calm the parent down...

A sense of humor:

One thing that you really need to help you keep your perspective in this job is a sense of humor. It's very important that you see the funny side of some situations because if you didn't, you probably would cry... I'm thinking particularly of the things that are happening in our economy, that are effecting the children's lives... hard to believe that they even exist... pretty important to have that sense of humor, to see the lighter side sometimes, to relieve the sense of despair that you feel sometimes.

Someone who exhibits leadership qualities, is good with people, self-confident, and a hard worker:

If they want to get into administration, they should have shown leadership qualities in some way, either taking part in extracurricular activities in the school or working for the Department of Education on evaluation of books, or something where you do something that's outstanding and that's different from everybody else... visibility to get it, then the continuation of the leadership... the ability to handle people is of prime importance... self-confidence, hard work, when I got the job I asked my principal what I should do, he said, "Pay attention to detail." I understand that now, you really have to read the fine print before you jump to any conclusions... you're the boss to an extent, but you're not a dictator; you have to take

other people's viewpoints into account, which you don't have to necessarily do when you're teaching in the classroom, I mean, you're the boss, and you run the show the way you want. When you are an administrator, you have to know or find out what's good for most of the people most of the time... sometimes we have to give up things we feel strongly about because the staff feel strongly the other way, and you've got to be able to do that.

Assertive rather than aggressive; a humanitarian; and diplomatic:

Someone who is not aggressive. I feel an aggressive person is a poor choice. Someone who is assertive but knows when to back off and not necessarily feel that they always have to win. If you have to be a winner all the time, you are going to have nothing but disgruntled staff. Someone who is not afraid to take some risks, who will show initiative... someone who has compassion for kids... you've got to be able to talk, joke and laugh with kids, not be up here where you're next to God. You've got to be able to have a community type school where kids can come to talk to you about just about anything. Sometimes it gets to me but to them it's important, and you've got to be able to talk to kids. Humanitarian, be able to feel for the kids, empathy, do your job, but the rat race some of these kids are in, sometimes, all they need is a touch, a hello. I try to call them by name. Diplomatic, you've got to work with parents, office, staff, and children. You've got to learn to give a little, take a little, compromise where you can... dealing with the people and make them feel good... everybody, the parents, make them feel at home, you watch and the school atmosphere--- it's a pleasure being there. I don't like disharmony, I try to get rid of it.

V. POTENTIAL OF THE ROLE

The assistant principals had visions of what would best develop the potential of the role. They viewed the position positively, saw it as being essential, and fulfilling a need in the schools. They had suggestions for the optimum development and utilization of the assistant principalship, primarily as a member of an administrative team.

One assistant principal discovered that the position had more potential than was first anticipated:

> In some ways I really hadn't thought of it as being a very effective job; I wasn't sure that I could do anything in it. I thought of the job as a little bit better than a teacher, but not really what I really wanted, but now after working in it for --- I realize you can do a lot of good, especially if you work with someone who is willing to give you a little bit of rope. But to be honest, when I first took the job, I was happy about it but I really saw it in the category of sort of a joe-boy, like, you do a lot of the little jobs that somebody else doesn't want to do and you don't really have much authority. That's how I perceived it. But actually, now that I've done it for --- I realize that, yes, there is a top line where your authority stops, there is this one person who you are always subject to --- the principal --- but you can do a lot if you can prove yourself and if you're willing to try and do things a little differently...because I really think they're looking for it out there, that teachers are more than happy if you're willing to do it. I think we need a whole new model of vice principal because I don't see it as just this job where you do the textbook rental and you collect up the balls for the playground. You know, I really see it as a much more dynamic role than that and I'm really glad to hear someone's doing something about it because I think people too long have looked at the vice

principal as that kind of a person, you know, secondary, who picks up all the jobs like lunchroom supervision and all the other garbage in the schools, so to speak, and really doesn't have any authority. But I think that can really change, particularly if you look at the school and look at the administrative team, where you have the strong and weak points of two people together, and you work as a team and that's something I've really tried to encourage this year. And I think we've succeeded to a certain degree.

I think if they (assistant principals) have the support of the principal and the support and belief of the teachers, that they could bring about major changes... you've got to provide arguments and proof, and research or whatever else, and if you can make them see it your way, then you can bring about big changes.

You can have a real impact on staff morale. You can have a tremendous impact on the direction you go in terms of being an educational leader. For example, our computer program... our teacher effectiveness program... our discipline program... our gifted program... our whole language program...

Essential Role

The assistant principals all felt that the role is essential to the effective operation of the school:

I don't think one person (the principal) can carry the load. I really think it (assistant principalship) can be a very essential position, as much as you make of it. I think some people might say, why do they even bother? But you do need to have someone else, one person can't be there all the time. So there's that angle, and also, if you look at

it as a team, it's a lot easier for everybody involved. One time, when the principal's mother died, he went away for a week, well you couldn't just appoint a teacher on staff,... a lot of things do come up, and I don't think anyone would feel all that comfortable about it. I think it's important to have two people at least. Whether one has to be a lot more superior than the other is debatable.

I think the job as it now is described in our system is very demanding and is going to get even more demanding, and any school over six teachers, even five teachers, needs somebody to take some of the load off the principal... And I think if you do away with the position, you do away with a very good training ground because to leap into the position of principal from classroom teacher--- because even if I had been given extra prep time to do the books and so on, I don't think it would prepare me to become a principal nearly as much as being an assistant principal.

A lot of schools do not even have an assistant principal anymore in the elementary level. At this size we usually do and we should have. It's left pretty well up to the principal and his staff, and with decentralized budgeting, where the schools are allocated so much money and they can do what they like with it, and I think because it saves principals money, a lot of them are dispensing with the role of the assistant principal, just having themselves as the sole administrator; but they are the smaller ones. I feel very strongly that it is a very bad move, because first of all, it is a training ground for principalships, also, whenever the principal leaves the school for a meeting or anything, he has to designate somebody to be assistant principal in his absence, and that person is not paid an administrative allowance and yet they take over the extra duties. I don't think it should be allowed at all... There have always been, in the very small schools, just one administrator and that is because there was not the work load, but we see it more and more

since we went to decentralized budgeting, in larger schools. That seems to be a trend in our system.

I think the assistant principal is quite essential. I am dismayed at the trend that I see in our system. At this size school you couldn't, or shouldn't operate without an assistant principal; there's a lot of work for one administrator. If a school is small, under one hundred, you can't afford to have an assistant principal and there isn't that much work to do.

I think it's necessary as a liason between the principal and the teachers. It's also nice to have three different people with different areas of expertise; and I suppose, just to have another person or two, for brainstorming or running ideas off of, otherwise, it might become a dictatorship.

Nowadays, no, I don't think a principal could (be without an assistant principal), there are just too many things going on constantly, the outside bombardment, the inside bombardment, the organization, no... even if they were a full-time administrator, they would lose contact with something, the staff, the students, the working... I don't think they could. I sure wouldn't. If there was only one administrator in this school, it sure wouldn't be me.

Probably (a principal could work without an assistant principal) but he would go nuts. Yeah, he could probably do it, if you had a really dynamic, efficient, well organized, general limitless energy sort of person, yes, maybe. And a really dynamic staff, people willing to grab the bull by the horns, where they'll be here by seven-thirty every morning. You would be asking a tremendous amount of the staff--- and the principal; I think too much.

> It could probably be done, but I don't know whether I would advise it. I am sure some things would suffer... How could you get your principal to deal with all the things that he does plus what I do?

Predicted Future of the Role

Several assistant principals predicted the direction that the role would take in the future.

This person envisions an expanded role for the principal, and a need for assistant principals to handle "administrivia":

> I think that as our board tries to make principals become more leaders in evaluating teachers, leaders in implementing curriculum, that a lot of the administrivia is going to fall on the vice principal; and that's necessary because you have to know how it works before you can give it to someone else.

With increased cutbacks, two people are worried that assistant principalships will be reduced:

> They are starting to close the smaller schools. They are a luxury we can't afford anymore. But I don't think the assistant principal will be done away with in larger schools. But in fact, some of the larger schools have done away with the assistant principal position and I am not happy with that. I would hope that that trend is reversed, but if the school board keeps on freezing budgets as they have this year, it will get worse because principals and staffs will have to cut costs any way that they can.

> It seems to be declining, that's my impression, not only in elementary schools,

> but also in the junior high schools to a certain extent, and even in the high schools... principals are finding that they are having to declare their assistants surplus. They don't want to but their enrolments are declining, or their budgets are shrinking, and they've no choice... I think eventually, possibly, who's to know for sure, but the system may suffer for it eventually, because if you don't have people out there who are being trained and you have principalships open, who are you going to put in there?... It's assistant principals that become principals.

This assistant principal hopes the position becomes more significant:

> I hope they (central office) see it should get more significant. They deal directly with the principal almost all the time. They assume the principal is working with the administrative team in the school... some of the comments that I have heard is that the assistant principals are part of the team; they are doing their job. I don't see them or haven't heard any rumors of them cutting administrative time.

Assistant principals have untapped potential:

> Given this program that's coming up (a teacher effectiveness program), and if our school system goes into it the way our superintendent wants to, I really think it's (assistant principalship) going to become more important. I think they're going to realize that we've got untapped potential in assistant principals because a lot of them are young and very, very energetic, and they're fresh or more fresh out of university, and usually a little more willing to take courses, and when I think of me running this program next year, I'm not going to neglect assistants because they're the people who can get out there and do a lot of good work. I mean, principals, we definitely need to do some work on, but

there's a lot of people out there who don't want to be bothered, but their assistants are willing and able.

Evaluation was seen as a future duty and potential concern:

> Then the assistant principal and the principal evaluate teachers... Well, the minister has been promoting evaluation. If he has his way everyone is going to be evaluated every year forever. I hope he doesn't have his way, because you are going to have many, many hours of work. I think evaluation is fine depending on what its purpose is and I think that probably everybody being evaluated every three or four years would be fine, but not every year--- it's a waste of time. Most teachers are very effective and they don't change from year to year. Perhaps if someone has some problems or is transferring, it is important, but not to evaluate the same teacher year after year when they are very good teachers, a very bad use of time.

> The idea of teacher evaluation is new this year. It is voluntary this year and compulsory next year. My principal said he wanted me to be involved with it. What we did this year was the first step. We went in for observation. He asked me how many I could handle... so I went in and observed those (three) teachers. I suppose I will be evaluating those teachers next year; so it is going to be one of the functions of the assistant principal along with the principal.

When asked how they felt about doing the observations, the assistant principal said:

> Well, I didn't mind the observations but the school board's idea of evaluation and the minister of education's idea of evaluation and mine are at odds, therefore it's not going to

be an easy role, because obviously I am going to have to do what my employers tell me that I have to do and I don't want to in the sense that I see teacher supervision as a formative type of evaluation. The minister sees it as a summative type. I suspect that there is going to be no common meeting of minds over that, so I will simply have to do as I'm told. It is all fine if the evaluation is good, but if in fact there is a teacher who needs help, it's not going to be something I'm going to enjoy.

A change in the direction of school administration toward educational leadership was predicted:

A lot of principals received these positions in a time when all you had to be was a manager, and a lot of them are still managing a school and not doing a lot of educational leadership. So, the only thing that I see happening, and I'm not sure that it will happen in the near future, but I sense that it will happen, is that school boards may start to really push the idea that you're not just a manager; you can't just run and count up the paper and the tacks that are used, and this type of thing, that it's not just to be a management situation and if you are not prepared to become an educational leader in the school... principals might rethink whether or not they want to be a principal for the rest of their life... I think in the past, it's been a very cosy position for a lot of people. They got into it and they sat there until they retired. Not to say that they didn't run their schools, they probably ran them fine. I mean, nothing ever burned down or anything like that, but in terms of really doing anything educationally, that is where we could pose some real questions.

Our superintendent is keen on the idea of moving people around... will be threatening for some people, because some people have been resting on their laurels... educational leadership becoming a major role of the job and the idea of yearly reviews for principals

> and not necessarily evaluations, but some sort of accountability, where it isn't just a matter of balancing the budget anymore.

Administrative Team

Throughout the interviews, as often indicated in the quotations, the assistant principals spoke favorably about working as a team with their principals. As well, the assistant principals observed the potential value of administrative teams in school administration.

> I think I would start by looking at the role and really making it a more important role in the eyes of probably the principal, because that's what it boils down to, that's how much authority you get is how much he or she is going to give you, and I'd like to see, rather than principal/assistant principal, you may have to name them that way, but I'd really like to see more along the lines of an administrative team. Granted, you may have the final say, but let's work together as a team; let's agree on what we're going to do. You pick up my shortcomings, I'll pick up yours, sort of thing. I really think that team approach is one that would be very effective.

> The very best use of the role would be that the principal and assistant principal were the same, that they worked as a team, that it wouldn't matter who you went to, but that would never happen because the assistant principal is not a full-time position in elementary. But as much as it could be, I think that sharing everything, duties, responsibilities, knowledge of what goes on, would be the ultimate. I suppose you could go to the other extreme, make two separate lists of jobs, and have no overlap or sharing. That to me, would be a very bad kind of thing, the very worst way to operate.

> The first year at the other school, we were appraised as a team, and the first thing that came through was that each person knew their job very clearly but that there was a lack of communication among the three of us as to the overall picture of the school. It emphasized to us the need for a team approach, the communication between the two (or three) people, and the getting together to discuss who does what, was it successful, how is it going, and consequently what are we going to... yes, the team, I believe in that.

In relating what should be, this assistant principal described a team situation that their spouse is a member of:

> Their school has done so much, and she's such an interesting lady, like, it's not really, "I'm the principal and you're the vice principal,"...(there is a first assistant principal and a second assistant principal) so they work as a real group; they do a lot.

This assistant principal is satisfied with the types of duties assigned, feels that they are largely administrative types of things, but feels that as a team, they need a set time to meet:

> I wish we did have (a set time to meet), in fact, I find it very difficult being in the classroom most of the time, to be able to meet with him when he is not busy with other poeple, or out to meetings. It is very hard to get a time. I wish that we did have a set time once or twice a week, hopefully next year we can do that.

Some, in recommending an administrative team, elaborated on the operation of their team:

> I think we have it here (administrative team).

> The administrative team, meaning that the two or three administrators are working together, backing each other up, providing a joint front, helping each other in tight situations, making suggestions that will keep things going, or whatever. It's not where, the principal says, "This is the way we're going to do it, so you go and carry it out." He says, "Well, what do you think, how should we do it?" And then the three of us sit and hash it out. Or we'll say, "Okay, this is how we feel, let's go to the teachers and see how they feel."

> We work pretty well as an administrative team. I go my way on some things... and he's got some of his, and the majority of them, we work together.., we meet regularly. In the morning from nine-thirty to ten-thirty we are both off, and we talk in the morning before school, for a few minutes. We catch each other when we can or when we need to.

Assignment

Many assistant principals commented on the types of assignments that they would like to see.

One person would like to teach different classes:

> One of the things that I would like to see, instead of being so devoted to one class, taking my teaching time and spreading it through six classes, because when you deal with kids, it's nice to see how they work all day long, not just when they come to my office and they need some help or they need to be disciplined. So in a way, it would be nice to be on a rotatioral basis, where you worked an hour with each class,...

Program development:

> I'd like to see the assistant principal a lot more involved with the program development in the school.... like getting the library organized, set up the materials,... work out some sort of program so that school is not just what you do in your classroom everyday. Those kinds of things a lot of people do in their classrooms, but you need somebody in a position like this, (assistant principal) to be able to do that for a school.

This person would like to have been a liason person in the library and elaborated on the merits of combining an assistant principalship with the library:

> One of the things that I thought I'd like to do was the library... I thought that the library is a benefit to everybody, and it's somewhere that I can make a little impact and everyone should feel it.
> ...as a liason person in the library. None of our schools have librarians, we can't afford it; we have one librarian in our system. But an assistant principal could do famous things in the library, because it's a challenging area, and somebody has to take control of it because of the fact that it is so related to the whole curriculum in the school. To me that would be an excellent way to use a vice principal.

Some central office assignment of time and duties:

> ...if their job was widened and if it was layed out by someone more than the principal, obviously he has to have --- let's say he had 35% time where he could use this person to do testing, or whatever, and then the superintendent or whoever, had 35% time where he said in this time I want the vice principal to do these types of things...

Although there may be a change in focus, the desire to

continue teaching was expressed:

> If I didn't teach though, I think I'd miss the teaching. I enjoy working with the kids; strictly administrator, unless you put a lot of effort into it, you would lose some of that contact, with what's going on with the kids. I enjoy the combination, it's just right. I would have a hard time going back just to teach but I also think that if I ever do become a principal I will continue to teach. I wouldn't want to strictly teach and I wouldn't want to be strictly an administrator.

One person reiterated that allocation of sufficient administrative time is necessary:

> If they are going to have an assistant principal in a school, they should be around half-time... when they start getting three-tenths or less, forget it. Like next year, when I am down to two-tenths, that's going to be bad. I've anticipated that it is going to be tough enough that I have already looked at the calendar to see when I am going to be back here, not as the assistant principal either, but as --- the teacher, just getting organized for next year. Once September comes, forget it. The minute the teachers walk in the door, I don't do anything for myself for probably the first month. All you are doing is doing things for other people, and rightly so. There are things that have to be done... you are just troubleshooting all the time, helping people get organized... transfers... problems... fine tuning to do... set up schedules, timetables, coordinate facilities... it looked great on paper, but sometimes there are conflicts that must be solved.

Training

Several assistant principals had suggestions for the training of assistant principals.

A job description for assistant principals and a training guide for principals to follow was suggested:

> The first thing I would do is try to identify things that are common to all schools, that an assistant principal does. There may not be many of them, but by asking for job descriptions from the schools you could come up with a composite as to a number of things that the assistant principal does in the school. Then I would provide some kind of guide for principals to follow to train assistant principals.

One assistant principal suggested teaching effectiveness strategies and interpersonal skills:

> I think on-the-job is one of the most effective, especially for these little jobs around the school, that you don't know; and that, you could get easily in a few days just being by the side of someone, being walked around and shown. And then, I think in terms of greater training, you have to be dealing with a person who has a curriculum focus, who has a program focus, and who really is an effective teacher and effective person, who can by attraction rather than by promotion, get people to believe in them. I would hate to see someone come into a school, brand new, and start saying this is how it has to be, and we're going to do it this way, and you're going do it this way, and we're all going to like it. That wouldn't work. But I really think that in your training you have to be trained to believe that what you can do is... you have to be able to do. Now I don't know how you train a person to do that. I think you have to start with a certain kind of person; but there are effectiveness strategies that you can teach someone. I think interpersonal skills are a really large part of that, maybe some training in how to deal with people, how not to take things personally, how to deal with people who do come to you with their problems, because I think you have to be pretty objective, whether it's kids, or teachers.

Direction for administrators on effective teaching so that they can model it for teachers:

> I think that there has to be some sort of training in this whole idea of effective teaching. I think it's really going to come the route of the principal and the assistant principal. And they can show it again, and model it, then it will come down to the teachers and come into the schools. And teachers are willing, willing to try anything if you can attract them to it.

One person, commenting on his own training, indicated that training should include more important things than how to fill out forms:

> Well, there were a couple of days at the beginning of the school year where we were taken and shown all the forms and things, but you see, that kind of stuff, again to me, is so beside the point compared to what I really think the job is. To me, filling out forms and tending to textbook rental --- anybody should be able to do that. It's clerical work, now granted, if it isn't done, you run into problems...

Courses on evaluation, budget, and utilization of personnel:

> I think we should have some kind of courses for evaluation of teachers, or how do you write a budget, or how do you make optimum use of the personnel that you have... different schools do it differently, and if we could hear what other people are doing, I think it would open up more horizons for us and give us opportunities to try different things.

Provision for interaction with other administrators:

> I would say that one of the best things to do is be able to talk to other assistant principals, vice principals, and even principals. Programming, budgeting, courses on dealing with people, talking in front of large groups... but to me the most valuable thing is talking with other administrators; what they do here; what they do there; to me that's the most important.

One person stressed that selection of the right sort of person to accomplish desired objectives should preceed training:

> When you talk about training to become a vice principal, I think you've got to look at people who are really educationally minded, that are willing to run a school not just in terms of balancing the budget and counting the books, it's got to be greater than that. However we train them... well I don't know if there should be training prior to a position, but I think that when you go to appoint someone to a position, you have to have a pretty good idea of what you are looking for and what sort of outcome you want --- and then you'll get the right sort of person for the job --- and that's what's changing. Superintendents are saying, "We don't just want someone who's going to go into a school and just sit there behind a desk. We want someone who is going to strive for excellence, and we want someone who is going to manage by walking around." You know, this whole search for excellence is really affecting the whole educational system. They're looking at schools as though they are private companies... it's becoming a consumer's market, parents driving from school to school to decide where they're going to put their children, and making educated choices. School's got to be more that just a building.

Evaluation

Evaluation was repeatedly a concern.

This person stressed the use of formative evaluation:

> The province is going to mandate that all teachers be evaluated, and the systems, districts be evaluated, and you know it's going to happen. What happens to me now is that I become both an assistant principal and an A.T.A. person, and I have very strong feelings on evaluation. I am in favor of evaluation, but not just any kind of evaluation. The A.T.A. has a lot of good policy on evaluation and I believe in it. Basically, except for a few instances, like permanent certification, or someone going from an interim to a continuing contract--- those can be summative evaluation--- but by and large, I feel our role should be more of a type of formative evaluation. So that you can continue to be an educational leader in your school, in that when you walk into the classroom the first thought that pops into that teacher's mind isn't "What's he here for, and what's going to happen, and is this going to be written up?" But instead, you're welcomed into the room; you are not seen as a threat, and then you can become an educational leader.

This person sees the teacher effectiveness program as the best means for formative evaluation:

> In our school, I've gone through the teacher effectiveness program... you had to go as a team, an administrator and a teacher, the idea being, we would go through the course, then I would conference the teacher. I would go in with something specific to observe. The consultant would be there as well and then I would conference the teacher and the consultant would conference me on my conference, the idea being to build my administrative skills... we have done a number of inservices in the school... sent half of our staff for inservices on classroom management... ideally would like to add different people each year until everyone has gone through the course, and then each person

would be conferencing someone else. We are going to double the program in the fall.

MISCELLANEOUS CATEGORIES

A number of interesting reflections did not fit entirely into the pattern of the themes presented, but they are significant and warrant inclusion. These reflections are presented under the categorical headings.

Gender

The assistant principals presented mixed views on gender distinction related to the appointment of administrators. Some of the comments indicated that in some cases gender distinction has been reduced or eliminated, but some indicated that gender distinction may still exist to a certain extent.

A female assistant principal felt that it still is a man's world:

> I think you have to be particularly good if you're a woman. Even though our system really does try hard to be fair to women, and they really are, we have a lot of women working, because they work so damned hard, they get their money's worth. But I still think that it's a man's world out there, and I encountered it when I came to this school; but it soon was eliminated because once you... a person is a person as long as you can do the job, and as long as you don't have a person who is really biased that will always hold true. But I firmly believe that a woman applying for this job has to be extra good, extra involved, extra outgoing, extra

> committed. I really do. I don't think it's easy. It's easier now than it ever was. But it's not easy...

This female assistant principal feels that improvement will come with time:

> I think it's a long, slow process in education, part of the whole deal of women proving themselves in society. I think the younger generation of men coming up are better, more accepting of women. And I think the situation will improve gradually as the old, chauvinist type of males retire, and the younger ones, who are more used to treating women equally come along and run society, that eventually there will be equality... The school board has been trying in recent years to promote women... I have no complaint about them...

This same woman hopes that she will be a principal of a large school, which she thinks shows confidence in women on the part of the school board:

> I hope to be a principal in a school that is fairly large. Women are still having to prove themselves to our school board, probably to all school boards, because I've noticed going through the list of female principals that they are quite often principals of small schools. I know two exceptions, one in high school, one in elementary, but both of those started off in very small schools. So I think that women have to be twice as good as men to be accepted... I think it shows a lack of confidence on the part of the board.

One male assistant principal recommended that ideally there should be both a man and a woman if there is more than one administrator in a school:

> I don't think that the skills and the things that you have to learn are related to gender. Although I do think it's very important, in a school where there are two adminstrators, that there be one of each.

A male assistant principal commented on the opportunity for either gender:

> In the past, as our system expanded, the joke around here was that anyone who wore pants was asked to become an administrator. I see things changing, in fact, I see more women being encouraged to go into administration, but I don't think that it should be any different, any easier for a man or easier for a woman. And I think that now with the involvement of the A.T.A. and the way times have changed, I don't think there is any prejudice anymore.

Another male feels that there is little or no distinction:

> No, I think probably, maybe women would disagree with me, but I am aware of as many women being appointed adminstrators, either principals or assistant principals, as men. There's an age group of people that I moved along with, and women that I have taught with, and men that were classroom teachers that have become administrators. I don't see a tremendous amount of distinction.

This female assistant principal feels that she has been treated fairly and that there has been no gender distinction:

> The school district has been exceptionally good about treating men and women equally...

This male assistant principal agrees with the female

assistant principal that the school district treats females and males equally:

> As far as I'm concerned there isn't any difference in opportunity for men or women. In this school district there are more lady principals in relation to other places. I have no qualms about that. Women and men are equal in their job opportunities and if they are qualified for it and they can do it... I've always felt that in an elementary school, a man/woman combination is good... we are lucky that we have a couple of women teachers we can call on since we have two men administrators.

Two people referred to other types of gender distinction.

This person, who was the first woman assistant principal in this school, observed that not having women in administration influenced the students' thoughts about the role of women:

> You should have heard some of the things I got from the kids when I got here, like "How can a woman be a vice principal?"... But it's been a really good experience, the girls in my room have such a better concept of themselves... like I'm not a feminist or anything, but I just believe in --- like in the school, only the boys were allowed to take down the chairs, only the boys were allowed to take out the phys. ed. equipment, it was too heavy. So we changed a lot of those things when I came, because I don't believe in that. Kids, boys or girls can do a job, and that I think has been really good for the kids.

A male assistant principal experienced gender distinction:

> The reason that I applied (for a transfer) is that I found it very difficult to work as a sole male on a staff... there were things that were being asked of me simply because of gender... that's why I asked for a move.

Personal Future

Two of the assistant principals interviewed indicated that they already knew of changes for the next school year. One person was transferring as an assistant principal to another school. One first year assistant principal applied for and received a central office position as an "animator." He felt that his assistant principalship contributed to obtaining the position in central office:

> I really do feel that this job was very instrumental to me getting that job, because it's been a real learning experience for me, and just to have any administrative experience is a good learning experience.

He commented on his future:

> This job (as central office animator) is going to either close doors or open doors... I'd like to have my masters finished in the next year... always wanted to teach teachers, would like to teach at the university some day... not boring old ed. admin. classes, I really think we need teacher training, and I'm talking about management training, specific teaching strategies training, like you can know as much as you want about geology and get out and teach, but it doesn't matter how much you know about geology if you can't teach it... I really don't think that teaching should be at the university. I think you should get your background and learn your subject area but I don't think you should learn to teach at the university. I don't

> think it's the area; I think we need to go back into this idea of teacher training where you actually have teaching strategies and the university uses the worst teaching strategies there are... But five years from now, that's an area I'd like to move to or maybe as a principal of a school... maybe I'll take a year off and travel...
> I can't see myself teaching for ever and ever and ever... I think you burnout... kids need someone who is young and dynamic...
> I'd like to write sometime, write a book; I really like developing things. There's a lot of areas I'd like to go into, I'd like to study music...

Most assistant principals saw themselves as principals in the future:

> Maybe I'll be a principal. I think if I went for a principalship, I think I would like one in a smaller school. I don't know why numbers should make any difference at all, because policies are the same, you get the same discipline problems, and everything, but I have this set in my mind, that if I am going to be a principal, I'd like to be one in a smaller school.

> In five years, still in this school district, I think. I've been here since I started teaching. I like it. I like the personnel and the way they run things. In five years, I could be a principal. If my health stays the way it is, I want to retire as soon as I can. Teaching, when you get older, you get set in your ways and changes become difficult. I will retire as soon as I can. I think before I retire I would like to try a principalship even for a couple of years.

> I see myself as a principal of an elementary school (in five years time).

> I am sure I will be in the system somewhere (in five years time), whether as an assistant principal or principal, I don't know; I hope a principal in a school that is fairly large... I will retire when I am sixty, in seven years time.

One person felt certain that he would be in a different school but was uncertain about a principalship:

> Five years down the road I probably won't be here. It is time that I left; I've been here six years, the longest I've been in one school... I will be in another school... you can become complacent; there's nothing like moving to get going. In a new situation you feel that you have to prove yourself, show people that you are a capable person, whether you are a teacher or an administrator... in ten years I will be near retirement... I don't know whether or not at that stage I would be willing to jump in and face the frustrations (of a principalship)... right now my family, my kids and their needs put a lot of demands on my time... Ten years from now, there will be just my wife and myself. I may feel that I have more time, less demands on my time, more energy, and feel that, hey, now's the time to go for it. I know that probably in the next two or three years I am going to make up my mind to either stay as an assistant principal or go for an administrative position... My life is really full... I'm a jack-of-all-trades, master of none.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to present: a summary of the study; the conclusions drawn from the analysis of the findings; a comparison of the findings of this study to the related literature discussed in Chapter Two; a discussion of the findings related to personnel administration theories; and the implications for school administrators, school districts, and universities, as well as recommendations for further study.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the administrative role of the elementary school assistant principal in selected schools in Alberta. Six assistant principals within three school districts were studied. The field research qualitative methods of in-depth interviewing, observation, and categorical analysis resulted in the formulation of 33 categories, which then formed the basis for five themes. The themes which emerged from analysis of the data were:

1. Assistant principals have a vision for the improvement of education. This vision generally motivated the assistant principals to apply for an administrative

position, and contributed to their elated feelings upon receiving an appointment. They hoped to gain the opportunity and the authority to do some of the things that they visualized, such as increasing school effectiveness, teacher effectiveness, parental involvement with the schools; and instituting a school-wide discipline policy, a gifted enrichment program, and a library improvement project.

2. The assistant principals experienced a number of changes upon becoming an administrator. There were some initial feelings of insecurity and isolation. There were changes in their teaching due to a new focus on administration in the school. There were changes in their relationship with the students and the staff.

3. The assistant principals view the essence of the position as being a training ground for a future principalship. They reported a dependency on the principal for assignment of duties and for consequent training, but they indicated a self-responsibility for ensuring their own success.

4. The assistant principal is a jack-of-all-trades. The person fulfilling this role needs to be flexible and receptive to change because the job has constant variety, interruptions, demands, and changes. The major frustrations associated with the position included not having the ultimate authority for decision making; not feeling prepared for such duties as teacher appraisal and budgeting; and not having

sufficient allocation of administrative time. Secondary frustrations included having to deal with unreasonable parents; lack of funding for desired programs; lack of communication with the principal; and constant interruptions. The major rewards associated with the position were self-satisfaction; positive feedback from staff, students, and parents; seeing their ideas implemented; and being privileged to all information relating to the school.

5. The role is seen as having great potential. The position is viewed as essential, fulfilling the need for the training of future principals, as well as contributing to the effective administration of a school. It is thought that the role should be clarified and expanded. The best utilization of the position is as a member of an administrative team.

The miscellaneous categories of gender and personal future were included. There were mixed feelings about the existence of gender distinction in administrative opportunities. Generally, the assistant principals felt that in some cases there is evidence of previous gender distinction, as indicated by the greater number of male administrators, but that this distinction is not as evident in the appointment of administrators today.

The assistant principals generally see themselves as principals within the next five to ten years. Most intend to retire in their fifties and intend to pursue other educationally related careers and interests.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of this study of the six assistant principals, the researcher concludes that generally speaking:

1. Assistant principals are dynamic, energetic, highly motivated people who are expecting to be trained for higher administrative positions, particularly a principalship.

2. The position is a valuable one for directed training. The assistant principals' mind set and expectations are receptive to direction and influence; the assistant principal is expecting to be learning and training. Moreover, the assistant principal, as second in authority to the principal, needs to know all aspects of the principal's job so that he or she may assume the principal's duties in that person's absence.

3. There is a potential for conflict in time and interest between administrative duties and teaching duties due to a change in focus. When teachers become assistant principals, it is because they have a broader vision for their influence, that is, a vision beyond their classroom. There is an interest in, and a commitment to administration, such that it often becomes a priority.

4. There may be a sense of isolation, separation, and even loneliness on the job, particularly for new assistant principals. If there is an increased emphasis on teacher evaluation as one of the duties of the assistant principal, this separation and isolation may become more evident.

5. The job is interesting, filled with variety, has many interruptions, and is often shifting or changing.

6. The position is viewed by the assistant principals as essential and as fulfilling a real need in the school.

7. The assistant principal is largely dependent on the principal for training, duties, and future advancement.

8. Assistant principals feel a need for further training particularly, in teacher evaluation and budgeting.

9. Assistant principals feel a need for greater interaction with other administrators.

10. Although there are frustrations associated with the position, the assistant principals generally view their positions as rewarding and fulfilling.

11. The optimum use of the assistant principal is as a member of an administrative team, where the assistant principal is given increasing authority and responsibility commensurate with his or her ability and experience.

COMPARISON OF FINDINGS TO THE RELATED LITERATURE

In concurrence with other studies and the literature that has been written about the assistant principal, this study found that the role of the assistant principal is multi-faceted, that it is viewed as fulfilling an essential role, particularly when it is as a member of an adminstrative team; that the problems associated with the position include

lack of role definition, and in some cases lack of administrative time. There was an acknowledgement of the dependency on the principal for training. However, the six assistant principals felt that their principals, for the most part, have been fair and have provided opportunity for growth and training.

In agreement with Powell's (1978) study, there is a need for additional training for incumbents and newly-appointed assistant principals, as well as inservice programs related to the various duties of the assistant principal to provide both information sharing and interaction.

The view held by the assistant principals that ultimately they are responsible for their own growth, was compatible with Brown and Rentschler (1973) who offered advice for assistant principals to gain more control over their professional development.

The finding by Newton (1983) that deficiencies in Staff Personnel would not likely be overcome by practical experiences on the job is consistent with the expressed need for further training on teacher appraisals in this study.

In concurrence with Collett's (1969) observation that assistant principals in large composite high schools have left behind them the roles of clerical assistants and supervisor of extracurricular activities, it appears that for the most part elementary assistant principals have also made gains toward more meaningful duties.

The finding in Windsor's (1976) study that principals and assistant principals had a difference in perception of planned training experiences, is difficult to assess in this study: there was no clear cut difference evident. However, the assistant principals do feel that there are areas in which they need further training.

The preference for operation as an administrative team was highly consistent with the recommendations of Gross, Shapiro, and Meehan (1980), Rankin (1973), Sprague (1973), and Childress (1973).

Findings from this study which were not consistent with the related literature pertained primarily to the importance of the position and to the relegation of assistant principals to disciplinary and clerical duties as suggested by Culver (1978) and Bordinger (1973). McLeod (1959), Enns (1959), and Longmore (1968) concluded in their studies that assistant principals spend much of their time doing clerical duties.

The assistant principals in this study indicated that disciplinary duties were shared by the administrators depending on who was available, and that there were few clerical duties since the support staff in the school are very effective.

There appears to be a change in the appointment of women to assistant principalships when the perspectives of this study are compared to Longmore's (1968) study.

There appears to be an improvement in the allotment of adequate administrative time in some cases compared to the findings of McLeod (1959) and Windsor (1976).

Indications of a negative self image as suggested by Bordinger (1973), and unfair assignment of duties as suggested by Brown and Rentschler (1973) were not present in this study. The assistant principals held a positive image of themselves and of their position, and felt that their principals were fair to them. They felt that they have an influence on the direction of the school and that they can make a difference. The assistant principals felt that their position was at least as good as they had hoped.

In conclusion, the findings from this study are most compatible with the more recent studies, and indicate that although there are still areas in need of improvement, generally gains have been made in the assignment of administrative time, the assignment of meaningful duties, the preparation for principalships, the reduction of gender distinction in appointments, and the working of assistant principals as members of administrative teams.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

While the intent of this study was not to prove nor disprove existing theories, but rather to discover the reality, it is interesting to reflect on the relationship of the findings to the work and thoughts of others in the field

of personnel administration. Upon reflection of the findings, it became apparent to the researcher that the perspectives of the assistant principals are consistent with many of the theories and discussions regarding motivation and supervision of personnel.

Motivation

The themes, "vision for improvement," "jack-of-all-trades," and "great potential," are consistent with motivation theory, particularly with the work of Abraham Maslow, Frederick Herzberg, Chris Argyris, Douglas McGregor,and others, whose studies and theories suggest that the most effective way to motivate employees is not just by improving work conditions, raising salaries, or shuffling tasks, but by encouraging growth, through increasing expertise, responsibility, accountability, sense of achievement, and recognition. According to Herzberg (1968:54) "The only was to motivate the employee is to give him challenging work in which he can assume responsibility."

Maslow's "theory of an internal need hierarchy has become one of the more popular conceptualizations for human motivation" (in Hoy and Miskel 1978:97). In the model based on his theory, Maslow proposes five basic degrees of need priority: (1) Physiological needs are those basic biological functions of the human organism; (2) Safety and security needs relate to a desire for a peaceful, smoothly running,

stable society; (3) Belonging, love, and social needs; (4) Esteem needs, the desire for being highly regarded by others. Achievement, competence, status, and recognition satisfy this need level; and (5) Self-actualization needs where the individual is working at top potential, peak satisfaction, effort, achievement, and personal and professional success (Hoy and Miskel 1978:98-99). Maslow identifies two basic kinds of needs: deficiency needs, which are the lower order needs which must be satisfied before the second, growth needs can develop. Growth needs, relating to the development and achievement of one's potential, are higher level needs which become activated only as lower needs become satisfied. Maslow maintains that gratification of a lower order need releases the person from the domination of one need, allowing for the emergence of a higher level need.

In this study, the assistant principals' motivation for pursuing an assistant principalship, and their voiced rewards of self satisfaction and positive feedback from peers is basically compatible with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, where once secure and reasonably confident in their position, the individual's deficiency needs are satisfied and they are able to respond to their growth needs of recognition, achievement, autonomy, responsibility, and accountability.

The assistant principals expressed good feelings about themselves, and were positively motivated by increased responsibility, freedom, and authority. This is consistent

with Herzberg's two-factor theory of hygienes and motivators which has a close conceptual relationship with Maslow's hierarchy theory. Sergiovanni and Carver (1980) discussed Herzberg's motivation-theory. Motivators, related to growth needs and job satisfaction, are satisfiers, and include achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, and advancement. "The motivation to work beyond what is necessary to meet minimum requirements comes from the satisfier set --- achievement and recognition, for example." (Sergiovanni and Carver, 1980:104) Hygiene needs are dissatisfiers, are related to conditions of work, and may contribute to job dissatisfaction if not present. "Since the dissatisfiers are related to the conditions of work rather than the work itself, they have little motivational potential for most people." (Sergiovanni and Carver, 1980:103) Hygienic factors, although not motivators, must be maintained and must meet individual needs for job security, fair treatment, interpersonal relations, salary, and working conditions. Motivation factors, the higher order, growth needs, are intrinsic, are associated with the work itself, and provide people with opportunities for psychological success.

The individuals in this study indicated reinforcement and motivation by Herzberg's motivators and Maslow's growth needs. The perspectives suggested a desire for growth related activities. The rewards were recognition,

responsibility, authority, being privileged to information, and increased autonomy and authority. Ambient factors such as pay and working conditions were neither motivators nor demotivators. The assistant principals indicated that since the administrative allowance was not large, money was not a significant reward. Perhaps, as stated by Sergiovanni and Carver (1980:110):

> Feeling underpaid but fairly paid may be the best that we can hope for. The basis upon which one decides if he or she is being paid fairly is comparison. Thus teachers as individuals and as groups continually compare their earnings with others in the same district, in other school districts, and in other occupations.

One of the questions asked by the researcher, if it was not naturally addressed by the subject, was based on Herzberg's critical incident technique (in Steers 1981:299): Can you think of an incident over the last month or two that made you feel that this job is really worthwhile? The responses included: positive feedback from staff or parents, completion of projects that they had initiated, success with problem students, and doing a difficult administrative supervisory task well. Recognition and the work itself seemed to be most closely related to affective responses. Pay and working conditions were not mentioned related to worthwhile critical incidents, supportive of Herzberg's thinking that although these may be dissatisfiers if not thought to be minimally reasonable, they were not satisfiers.

In a study by Birarda cited by Sergiovanni and Carver (1980:85), it was found that the lower level needs are generally well satisfied for teachers, but the higher level, growth needs are not being well satisfied. There is a perceived deficiency in the growth needs area, especially at the esteem level. "Esteem still appears as a dominant area of perceived need deficiency, actually increasing for all but the oldest group." The researcher hypothesizes that seeking esteem and other growth related needs may contribute to the assistant principal's desire for a position which they perceived allows for greater responsibility and influence.

Further though, there were concerns expressed regarding evaluation, parental pressures, and government pressures. In Birarda's study (in Sergiovanni and Carver 1980:86-87), security deficiencies were reported and possible influences were suggested:

> But esteem is rivaled in 1977 by important increases in perceived need deficiencies for all groups at the self-actualization level on the one hand and (except for the 25-to-34 age group) security on the other. Changes in the work demands of educators and in the work environment may well be contributors to these increases in security. One can reasonably speculate that accountability, increased lay participation, state- and provincial-mandated competency testing, and general increases in the political nature of education influence feelings of security. These pressures, combined with the prospect of older educators facing retirement in an age of economic uncertainty, can take obvious tolls.

Job Enrichment

Perhaps the assistant principals' general positive view of their position even though there seem to be many pressures and frustrations, can be related to job enrichment theories, where these people have had their jobs,compared to when they were strictly teaching, enriched through increased opportunity for task variety, task uncertainty, task significance, task identity, responsibility for results, and knowledge of results. These characteristics were described by Sergiovanni and Carver (1980:126-127):

> Task variety implies building into the teaching job a greater assortment of tasks. It is assumed that varied work increases interest. This is in contrast to curriculum-building strategies, for example, which emphasize breaking down teaching episodes into small parts and assigning them to "specialists."
>
> Task uncertainty refers to tasks which involve information processing and cognitive stimulation...
>
> Social interaction recognizes that individuals at work generally derive satisfaction from interacting with others and for many, this source of satisfaction can be an inducement for working or at the least a stimulus to building commitment and loyalty to the work group and school. Despite the wide acceptance of importance of social interaction among workers, and recognizing that significant gains are being made in schools in using teaching teams, teaching is still a relatively private activity.
>
> Task significance refers to the perceived importance by teachers of the work to be done. It is often assumed that providing teachers with detailed objectives increases task significance when indeed the opposite may be

> the case. Task significance requires an understanding and appreciation of what the educational program as a whole tries to accomplish and how one's individual efforts fit into the larger view.
>
> Task identity, related to task significance, requires that one have a larger view of what the school is about and that one sees how his or her part contributes to this larger purpose...
>
> Responsibility for results requires that teachers be given a great deal of discretion over task activities but held more accountable for obtaining results...
>
> Knowledge of results refers to feedback as to the quality of one's performance. Clearly, without feedback it is difficult to derive satisfaction from accomplishment.

Sergiovanni and Carver (1980:127) reported suggestions by Staw and research by Hackman and Oldham. "Staw suggested that task variety, task uncertainty, and social interaction are characteristics associated with task behaviors which lead to greater intrinsic satisfaction, more voluntary participation on tasks, and greater persistence in pursuing tasks." The research by Hackman and Oldham (in Sergiovanni and Carver 1980:128) suggested:

> ...personal and work outcomes such as intrinsic motivation, high-quality work performance, high satisfaction with work, and low absenteeism are a function of the presence in individuals of three psychological states: experienced meaningfulness of the work, experienced responsibility for work outcomes, and knowledge of results.

To a certain extent, the assistant principalship has

provided all of the above suggestions for job enrichment, except perhaps, social interaction. It is interesting to note that this is a perceived area of need expressed by many of the subjects.

Herzberg (1968:60) also suggested principles for job enrichment, which he calls "vertical job loading" and which involve the motivators: responsibility, personal achievement, recognition, growth, learning, and advancement. They are:

A. Removing some controls while retaining accountability
B. Increasing the accountability of individuals for own work
C. Giving a person a complete natural unit of work (module, division, area, and so on)
D. Granting additional authority to an employee in his activity; job freedom
E. Making periodic reports directly available to the worker himself rather than to the supervisor
F. Introducing new and more difficult tasks not previously handled
G. Assigning individuals specific or specialized tasks, enabling them to become experts

These principles are consistent with the nature of the views the assistant principals have about their position.

Argyris (in Hoy and Miskel, 1978:97) suggested a continua where infants begin as dependent and submissive with few skills, surface abilities, and short time perspective and develop toward adult ends of independence, autonomy, many abilities, development of a few abilities in depth, and a longer time perspective. He suggested that jobs should be

structured to allow individuals to develop their abilities leading to increased responsibility, independence, and autonomy, and thus allowing maximum motivation. In concurrence, the assistant principals wanted direction and structure to learn the job, and felt rewarded and stimulated when they felt they had earned and were granted increased responsibility and autonomy.

The views of the assistant principals toward students, staff, and themselves, indicate that they are operating under McGregor's Theory Y (in Steers, 1981:120):

> Theory X managers assume that the average worker: 1) is lazy and dislikes work; 2) must be coerced and closely controlled on the job; 3) wants security instead of responsibility. Theory Y managers, on the other hand, assume that the average worker: 1) has the capacity to enjoy meaningful work; 2) is self-directed and needs little supervision; 3) actively seeks responsibility; and 4) is capable of being imaginative and creative at work.

Particularly when discussing teacher evaluation and presenting their feelings about formative evaluation, the assistant principals generally supported McGregor's Theory Y view.

The themes, "vision for improvement," "jack-of-all-trades," and "potential of the position," appear to be closely related to, and consistent with, many of the motivation theories. The findings of this study, as they relate to motivational research have implications for staff

development at all levels, particularly if it is believed, as Sergiovanni and Carver (1980:xi) suggested, "that the growth and development goals which we hold for youngsters are best achieved by teachers and other adults who are committed to these goals also for themselves --- both as persons and professionals."

Selection and Training

The themes, "things change," and "a training ground," relate to the literature on supervision of personnel, particularly selection, including characteristics for effective leadership; and training, including induction/orientation, training for change, training for improved performance, and training for promotion.

Considering the dependency of the assistant principal on the principal for training and development as acknowledged by the subjects, Castetter's (1981:138) recommendation should be considered: "During the past few years, the concept of centralized recruitment and screening and decentralized selection has gained acceptance as a procedure for giving unit administration a voice in the selection of the personnel for whose direction they will be responsible."

Induction

The initial feelings of insecurity and uncertainty

expressed by some of the assistant principals substantiate Castetter's (1981:189) position on induction of personnel:

> Induction may be defined as a systematic organizational effort to assist personnel to adjust readily and effectively to new assignments so that they can contribute maximally to the work of the system while realizing personal and position satisfaction... A school system can recruit, select, assign, reassign, and transfer personnel, but until these individuals become fully adjusted to the work to be performed, the environment in which it is performed, and the colleagues with whom it is performed, they cannot be expected to give their best effort to attaining the goals of the institution.

Castetter (1981:193-195) outlined the goals of induction under the headings: information, need satisfaction, position compatibility, assistance, support development, acceptance, assimilation, adjustment, orientation, retention, security, and continuity.

As evidenced by the assistant principals' desire for upgrading and training for new needs, such as teacher appraisal, budgeting, and school effectiveness, ongoing induction as further suggested by Castetter (1981:211) would be valuable:

> Although induction is commonly thought of as an activity focused upon personnel new to the system, it can also be construed as a career-long activity designed to keep all personnel abreast, periodically, of changes in organizational plans and policies, changes in position function and technology, and --- of vital concern to all members --- changes in personnel policies and procedures.

Training For Change And Promotion

The finding that "things change" for those moving into assistant principalships is closely related to training. Musella (1982:8) indicated that, "Training purposes fall into two categories: (1) improvement of performance in the present position, and (2) preparation for another position." He further stated that "All we know about change indicates that all change requires some amount of successful training." Acknowledging the extent of change that an individual may experience upon entering administration, there is a need for training and preparation. Musella (1982:9) also stressed the involvement of the school district in developing training programs:

> The other major purpose of training is to prepare one for another position --- promotion or transfer. The school district must assume major responsibility for the development of the "farm system," that is, the ongoing training of staff for positions which the organization will need filled in the future. The school district, upon identifying these positions, should describe the type of person (skills, knowledge, experience, personal characteristics) needed to be successful in the position, and develop appropriate training programs. Consequently, this means more than having an effective selection process; it means developing the pool of acceptable candidates.

This is consistent with the finding that the assistant principalship is an essential position and that it is or should be a training ground. Training of assistant

principals then, should be done to prepare them for the changes they will be encountering; to improve their performance; and to prepare them for promotion.

On-The-Job Training

Hinrichs (in Dunnette 1983:854) identified the most common on-the-job training techniques:

> 1. Job instruction training essentially is the process of having a trainer explain the job to the trainee, observe his performance, and provide feedback about his performance.
> 2. Orientation training is merely a systematic effort to ensure that a new employee has all of the basic information he needs to function effectively.
> 3. Apprentice training is like a period of internship in which the trainee works under the guidance of an experienced supervisor for a specified period of time before achieving journeyman status.
> 4. Performance appraisals in many organizations fulfill a training and development function by providing feedback about the appropriateness of on-the-job behavior and performance.
> 5. Coaching is the process of ensuring that training and learning occur in the day-to-day man-manager relationship.
> 6. Job rotation is widely used in management development as a technique to systematically ensure that trainees are exposed to a variety of organizational functions.
> 7. Assistantships or various committee assignments similarly are used to provide personnel development.

However, Hinrichs (in Dunnette, 1983:854) identified some of the problems associated with on-the-job training:

> All of these on-the-job techniques are based upon the philosophy that people learn a job

> best by doing it. However, this conclusion may or may not be justified, and there are a number of obvious problems with many of the on-the-job programs:
> 1. They may be inefficient, resulting in low productivity and waste.
> 2. There may be low involvement of the trainee in the training process...
> 3. The quality of instruction diffused through an on-the-job situation may be less competent than instruction concentrated in the training department.
> 4. Too often in the on-the-job situation training takes second place to getting the job out.

These observations regarding on-the-job training, which is the usual type of training for assistant principals, combined with the observations of the assistant principals, may have implications for a systematic training program which includes a variety of approaches and provides direction to the principal, who is expected to play a major part in the training.

Characteristics of Effective Principals

Many of the characteristics for assistant principals identified by the subjects and that they appear to exhibit are consistent with characteristics identified in studies of effective principals. Perhaps an indication that these individuals may be well suited to their position and to a future principalship is their overall vision for what their school should be like.

In a review of more than 75 research studies, Persell

and Cookson (1982:28) stated that, "Effective principals appear to have a vision of what their school should be like. Without this mental picture, the leadership role can too easily fall into the trap of reacting to negative situations and not creating positive situations." Having a vision for better education is the foundation for high expectations. Once these individuals have visualized improvements, they may then form high positive expectations, leading to appropriate behavior for achieving their visions. This theme then, has implications for the selection and development of administrators. Also, individuals who possess and demonstrate characteristics associated with effective leadership would likely be an asset and contribute greatly to an administrative team situation.

As indicated by their involvement in many aspects of the school, their hours of work, their willingness to be involved in activities both in and out of the school, and their motivation to do and learn more, these individuals are exhibiting other characteristics of effective principals. Persell and Cookson (1982:27) stated that, "The effective principal is a forceful, dynamic individual who is open to new ideas and has a high energy level." These findings, that these assistant principals exhibit characteristics of effective principals, may be indicative of existing effective selection procedures.

Administrative Teams

In expressing their support for, and desire to be part of, an administrative team, the assistant principals identified communication, cooperation, and trust, as being necessary. They desired a set time, or at least opportunities for regular communication with the principal. Their desires are compatible with the essential characteristics for management teams identified by Erickson and Gmelch (1977:8):

> For any management team to operate effectively and efficiently, it is essential that team members possess several basic characteristics. Team members must:
> 1. Be able to invest significant amounts of time.
> 2. Be able to work cooperatively rather than competitively toward common goals or purposes.
> 3. Have open and clear lines of communication.
> 4. Have trust in the integrity of their colleagues.
> 5. Encourage and work to understand the full explanation of minority opinions.
> 6. Have an acute skill in listening (versus hearing) to the opinions of others.

Erickson and Gmelch (1977:10) also refer to McGregor's Theory Y manager as being appropriate for team management:

> ...administrators holding Theory Y assumptions about their employees would find that the team management concept provides opportunities for a more effective operation of their school or school system. The Theory Y adminstrator believes that team members are basically self-directed, creative, motivated to become self-actualized, and that they desire to make contributions and decisions that will enhance organizational goals. Team management would,

therefore, unleash the type "Y" potential in each member.

It becomes apparent upon relating the findings of this study to various related theories in personnel supervision, that the perspectives of these assistant principals have many implications for the selection, training, and development of staff in the quest for effective leadership.

IMPLICATIONS

The findings and consequent conclusions of this study have implications for school districts, principals, assistant principals, universities, and for further research. However, since this study focused on the perspectives of only six elementary school assistant principals, generalizability must be considered in terms of comparability; and the implications of this discovery study take the form of questions to be considered, contemplative suggestions, rather than directives.

Implications For School Districts

Based on the degree of transferability and applicability of the context of this study to the school district's environment, the following implications may be valuable in the development of policies regarding assistant

principalships in elementary schools.

In view of the findings of this study, including both the positive aspects and the negative aspects of the role as perceived by the subjects; and considering the relationship of the findings of this study to the related studies cited in the literature review, school districts could:

---provide for greater role definition, so that less is left to chance that it will be both a training ground and an administrative position which is contributing to the effectiveness of the school.

---identify duties which are deemed to be applicable to the assistant principalship system wide, which could then be utilized as the basis for the job description of assistant principals.

---provide direction and training on system wide policies and procedures regarding such areas as budget, evaluation, discipline, effectiveness strategies, and public relations skills; including orientation for new assistant principals and updating inservices for incumbents.

---consider a more structured, specified job description and training program for beginning assistant principals; and less structure, more flexibility, freedom, authority, and responsibility for experienced and career assistant principals.

---encourage rotation of duties within the school to broaden the experience of assistant principals.

---consider instituting a program for assistant principals to visit different schools in order to broaden their experience and to expose them to different methods and new ideas.

---provide opportunities for assistant principals to meet with other administrators periodically in order to share ideas and concerns as a means of increasing awareness of alternatives and of providing stimulation and motivation.

---provide assistant principals with a contact person in central office to discuss issues and concerns.

---ensure that appropriate and adequate administrative time is granted to assistant principals.

---encourage school administrators to consider alternative teaching assignments which could allow for greater flexibility, and possibly increased interaction with a greater number of students in the school.

---consider stressing formative evaluation of teachers by assistant principals to maximize the advantages of the middle man position and of the collegial model.

---provide career information describing the various aspects of the position for individuals considering an assistant principalship to enhance realistic job previews.

---involve principals in the selection process to enhance compatibility of the administrators within the school.

---provide direction for principals on the training of assistant principals.

---stress administrative teams in school administration; including provision for training on what constitutes an administrative team, and how to work as members of an administrative team.

Implications For School Administrators

School administrators could:

---ensure that they are familiar with the advantages of an administrative team, including understanding the characteristics of administrative teams.

---assess their own functioning as a team.

---set up scheduled administration meeting times to enhance communication and understanding.

---provide for rotation of administrative duties.

Implications For Future Assistant Principals

Individuals aspiring to assistant principalships could:

---broaden their experience base by teaching different grades, and accepting a variety of responsibilities.

---assume leadership duties in the school and community.

---extend their educational base by taking administration courses and curriculum courses.

---develop their personal educational philosophy

---consider their potential for making a contribution to education in a broader way.

Implications For Universities

Universities could:

---ensure that courses are available which will provide educational training for educational leaders.

---offer courses on budgeting, teacher appraisal, effectiveness strategies, administrative teams, and communication skills.

---consult with, and advise school districts, regarding optimum utilization and development of school personnel.

Implications For Further Research

This study, which focused on six assistant principals, generated findings which could provide the basis for further research in order to determine the degree of generalizability of the study; and to gain broader perspectives of administrative roles, teaching roles, and other occupational roles. Some possible areas of further research are studies to:

---assess the advantages and disadvantages of a variety of teaching assignment combinations with assistant principalships.

---determine the characteristics and experiences which contribute to successful assistant principalships in preparation for principalships.

---assess the advantages and disadvantages experienced by schools which have, or do not have, assistant principals.

---assess the advantages and disadvantages of administrative teams in schools.

---determine the effect of types of teacher evaluation on the communication and relationship between staff and school administrators.

--- relate job enrichment theories to administrative positions.

---determine the extent of gender distinction in application for, and appointment to, administrative positions.

---relate adult development theories to such aspects of the assistant principalship as motivation, training, assignment, development, and promotion.

---determine the feasibility and desirability of an apprenticeship program for assistant principals.

The study could be replicated to:

---determine the degree of generalizability of this study to elementary school assistant principalships.

---assess whether similar perspectives are evident in other administrative positions and in teaching positions.

---assess whether individuals in other second in authority positions in other occupations hold similar perspectives of their role.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LETTER TO ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

PILOT STUDY

APPENDIX A. LETTER TO ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS --- PILOT STUDY

64 Manor Drive
Sherwood Park, Alberta
T8A 0S4
April 30, 1984

Dear _____,

I wish to express my appreciation to you for agreeing to participate in my study on the role of the elementary school assistant principal in selected schools in Alberta.

As we discussed in our telephone conversation, this study will be qualitative in nature with the intention of providing insights into the present role of the elementary assistant principal. Descriptive analysis, based primarily upon in-depth interviews with six assistant principals within three different school jurisdictions will be used to generate categories of perspectives which may lead to further research questions or future hypotheses, studies, and policies.

Your part in this study will be as one of two participants in the pilot study, which will assist me in defining and refining the techniques for the study.

Again, thank you for including the participation in this study in your already full and busy schedule.

Sincerely,

APPENDIX B

LETTER TO ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

ACTUAL STUDY

APPENDIX B. LETTER TO ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS --- ACTUAL STUDY

64 Manor Drive
Sherwood Park, Alberta
T8A 0S4
April 30, 1984

Dear _____,

I wish to express my appreciation to you for agreeing to participate in my study on the role of the elementary school assistant principal in selected schools in Alberta. This study is the basis for my master's thesis in Educational Administration.

As we discussed in our telephone conversation, the study will be qualitative in nature with the intention of providing insights into the present role of the elementary assistant principal. Descriptive analysis, based primarily upon in-depth interviews with six assistant principals within three different school districts will be used to generate categories of perspectives which may lead to further research questions or future hypotheses, studies, and policies.

I have received written permission from _____ School District to conduct the study.

Again, thank you for including the participation in this study in your already full and busy schedule.

Sincerely,

APPENDIX C

LETTER TO PRINCIPALS

APPENDIX C. LETTER TO PRINCIPALS

64 Manor Drive
Sherwood Park, Alberta
T8A 0S4
April 30, 1984

Dear _____,

Thank you for your permission and cooperation in allowing me to work at your school with your assistant principal on my study of the role of the elementary school assistant principal in selected schools in Alberta. This study is the basis for my master's thesis in Educational Administration.

As we discussed in our telephone conversation, the study will be qualitative in nature with the intention of providing insights into the present role of the elementary assistant principals. Descriptive analysis, based primarily upon in-depth interviews with six assistant principals within three different school districts will be used to generate categories of perspectives which may lead to further research questions or future hypotheses, studies and policies.

I have received written permission from the _____ School District to conduct the study.

Again, thank you for your cooperation and consequent contribution to research in education.

Sincerely,

APPENDIX D

BEGINNING INTERVIEW GUIDE

APPENDIX D. BEGINNING INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What has been your educational and professional background?

2. Describe your present situation: school size, student population, staff size, special programs, administrative time....

3. Tell me about the elementary assistant principalship; what is it like being an assistant principal?

4. How did you get this position?

5. What were your feelings upon receiving this position?

6. What are your current feelings regarding your position?

7. What are your duties as an assistant principal?

8. What contributes to the fulfillment or rewards of your position?

9. Can you think of something in the last month or two that made you feel that this position was worthwhile?

10. What are the frustrations associated with the position?

11. Can you think of something which has occurred within the last month or two that made you feel that this position is not worthwhile?

12. To what extent do you perceive this position to be transitory, leading to a principalship?

13. To what extent do you perceive this position to be a training ground?

14. What do you perceive to be the future of the position in your school district?

15. What do you consider the potential of the role to be?

16. What suggestions would you have for achieving the potential of the assistant principal?

APPENDIX E

EXPANDED INTERVIEW GUIDE AND INITIAL CATEGORIES

APPENDIX E. EXPANDED INTERVIEW GUIDE AND INITIAL CATEGORIES

At the start of the interview, the researcher will:

Provide background for the study

Describe methodology

Assure confidentiality

Ask for questions

Interview Questions:

1. What has been your educational and professional background?

2. Describe your present situation: school size, student population, staff size, special programs, administrative time....

3. Tell me about the elementary assistant principalship; what is it like being an assistant principal?

4. How did you get this position?

5. What were your feelings upon receiving this position?

6. Have your feelings changed since you first got your position?

7. What are your current feelings regarding your position?

8. What are your duties as an assistant principal?

9. Who prescribes your duties?

10. What is a typical day like? What is a typical week like?

11. What are your hours of work?

12. To what extent are your duties disciplinary or clerical/custodial in nature?

13. What contributes to the fulfillment or rewards of your position?

14. Can you think of something in the last month or two that made you feel that this position was worthwhile?

15. What are the frustrations associated with the position?

16. Can you think of something which has occurred within the last month or two that made you feel that this position is not worthwhile?

17. To what extent do you perceive this position to be transitory, leading to a principalship?

18. What if this position was not transitory, how would you feel?

19. To what extent do you perceive this position to be a training ground?

20. What constitutes your training?

21. What do you perceive to be the future of the position in your school district?

22. How essential do you consider assistant principals to be to the running of the school?

23. What do you consider the potential of the role to be?

24. What would you advise someone wanting to become an assistant principal?

25. What suggestions would you have for achieving the potential of the assistant principal?

26. Where do you see yourself in five years? Ten years?

APPENDIX F

EXPANDED CATEGORIES FROM INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

APPENDIX F. EXPANDED CATEGORIES FROM INTERVIEW TRANCRIPTS

Why they applied for the job.

How they got the job.

Feelings about getting the job.

Improvements envisioned.

Feelings about the position now.

Improvements achieved.

Training.

A training ground.

Dependency on principal.

Transitory.

What if not transitory.

Promotion opportunities.

Duties.

Discipline.

Clerical duties.

Supervision of staff.

Description of the role.

How duties decided.

Relationship with teachers.

Middle person.

Relationship with students.

Relationship with principal.

Affect on teaching.

Hours of work.

Critical incident --- worthwhile.

Major rewards.

Critical incident --- not worthwhile.

Major frustrations.

Suggestions for the role: training, duties, evaluation.

Role essential.

Future of the role.

Advice to others.

Gender distinction.

Administrative team.

Potential of the role.

Affect on personal life.

Areas in need of further training, experience.

Self evaluation.

Future aspirations.

APPENDIX G

FINAL CATEGORIES WITHIN THEMES

APPENDIX G. FINAL CATEGORIES WITHIN THEMES

I. VISION FOR IMPROVEMENT

1. Why They Applied
2. How They Felt When They Got The Job
3. Types of Visions
4. Visions That Have Been Realized

II. THINGS CHANGE WHEN YOU BECOME AN ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

5. First Feelings
6. Teaching Changed
7. Relationship With Students
8. Relationship With Teachers
9. Relationship With Principal
10. Other Changes

III. A TRAINING GROUND

11. A Training Ground --- Transitory
12. Outlooks on Promotion
13. Assistant Principalship As A Career
14. Dependency On The Principal
15. Aspects of Training
16. Responsibility For Their Own Success
17. Self-evaluation of Readiness For Promotion

IV. A JACK-OF-ALL-TRADES

18. What The Job Is Like
19. Hours Of Work
20. Disciplinarian
21. Clerical/Custodial
22. Supervision
23. Rewards
24. Frustrations
25. Characteristics

V. POTENTIAL OF THE ROLE

26. Essential Role
27. Predicted Future Of The Role
28. Administrative Team (Suggestions)
29. Assignment (Suggestions)
30. Training (Suggestions)
31. Evaluation (Suggestions)

MISCELLANEOUS CATEGORIES

32. Gender
33. Personal Future